

Spanish

Prisoner



Spanish

Prisoner

Peter Elstob

LONDON
MACMILLAN & CO. LTD
1939

COPYRIGHT

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This narrative is true in every particular. In its present form it was rewritten from a pocket diary and from notes on odd bits of paper. The names of characters and places are unaltered; there are no fictitious incidents and everyone mentioned is or was a living person.

To Busby and Mary

*Spanish
Prisoner*

Chapter One

"Do you want to go to Spain?"

The old lady had come silently into my hut. I was busy writing and hadn't noticed her. I remembered that a few days before I had idly mentioned that I would like a chance to fly in the Spanish War. She hadn't answered and I had forgotten the remark. Now she stood in the doorway bursting with news.

"Do you want to go to Spain?" she repeated impatiently.

I stared at her, my thoughts racing. I knew her well enough to know that this was no idle question. Did I want to go to Spain? After all, why not? It sounded like adventure and excitement and it was in search of this that I had thrown up college. I had come to England to find it and had thought

that I had succeeded when I was given a short service commission in the Royal Air Force. But I had lasted just long enough in that dignified service to learn to fly and to discover that the antics of American-educated Englishmen were not appreciated. I had resigned my commission by request.

A friend had lent me a one room hut in Hampshire and I had retired from the world to write the book it was waiting for. The pastoral life had begun to pall, my money had evaporated and I had nightmares of offices, tightly rolled umbrellas, and Old Age Pension Schemes.

Did I want to go to Spain?

"Rather!" I answered.

The bus that wended its weary way down Piccadilly the next morning was carrying me to my first appointment. I was so excited I could hardly sit still. This was the real thing! It sounded like an extract from a spy story. I had to meet a stranger under the statue of Eros at eleven o'clock. He would be wearing a white flower in his buttonhole.

The old lady had told me that I was to march up to the man with the white flower and address him as Señor Diaz. I wondered what he would look like. Probably tall and aristocratic with perhaps a white mustache, and certainly tanned a deep brown.

I got off the bus and looked eagerly towards the

island on which the statue stands. Perhaps it was all a practical joke. But no, for there he was walking slowly round the statue scanning the crowd. His white flower shimmered unwinkingly.

I made my way through the traffic to him.

"It's a nice day, isn't it, Señor Diaz?" I said brightly. It wasn't. As a matter of fact it was raining.

But that didn't worry him. He suggested that we go and have a drink. I was overcome with his hospitality and we adjourned to a near-by bar.

Over the drinks he did some explaining.

I had an opportunity to look him over. He was rather a disappointment. Short and fat and greasy. Dirty collar and soup-stained tie. Shifty eyes and sallow complexion. No, I didn't like him.

"I can only take you to someone else, who, if he likes your looks, will put you in touch with the people who do the hiring. They need pilots badly."

We finished the drink and I asked him carelessly if he would have another, at the same time mentally calculating my ability to pay. But he said no, the one was enough. I heartily agreed and he got up and started for the door. The barman coughed suggestively and Señor Diaz looked expectantly at me. I looked expectantly at him and the barman looked expectantly at both of us. Señor Diaz stepped outside. I paid the bill.

I followed him outside fuming. He smiled when he saw me.

"Thank you," he said simply.

We started walking in Shaftesbury Avenue and then turned off and off again. We passed through a street of outdoor stalls that I had never known existed. In a few minutes I was hopelessly lost.

We came to a shop that sold Oriental rugs and went through this and up the stairs at the back to a door. There was an absolutely unpronounceable name on the door. Diaz knocked and someone yelled for him to come in.

Inside was a large room packed from floor to roof with a heterogeneous collection of imported household ornaments. There were vases and statues and pictures galore. Rugs and carpets and cushions. Leatherwork, brasswork, wickerwork and woodwork. In the middle of all this, in a tiny space seemingly cleared away for the purpose, stood an old dilapidated desk heaped with papers. There was a bright light overhead, a man seated in front. From the man to the door a narrow passage through his treasures formed a tunnel under some heavy rugs laid across crates of glass. He was a little wizened old Jew in a green eyeshade and a black smock. He looked like a miser counting his gold.

Diaz told me to wait by the carpet while he went and talked to the other. A long whispered discussion followed, interjected by occasional appraising

glances at me. I didn't know how I was supposed to look so I just scowled fiercely. It seemed to work, for in a minute the little Jew shuffled over to me.

"We will go and see Banin," he announced impressively. "The Banin!"

I murmured politely that that would be nice and tried to think who Banin might be.

When we got outside again, the slight drizzle had turned to a downpour. Both of them had nice warm raincoats on. The little Jew asked me why I wasn't wearing one. I had sold mine weeks ago.

"I never wear one," I said solemnly. They didn't seem surprised.

We started walking. I was in the middle with the rain running down my neck and they were having an argument on Parliamentary Procedure. I wondered if it rained much in Madrid.

At the next corner Señor Diaz left us. He wrung my hand as though I was an old friend.

"Good-by and the best of luck!" he said in a tone that indicated I'd need it.

The little Jew and I tramped on. He soon discovered that I knew nothing about Parliamentary Procedure and gave up conversation. My hair was sopping wet and directing the streams of water down my face and thence inside my shirt, my trousers were plastered against my legs and at every step my shoes sprayed water like sponges. I took

a look at him. He was dry and comfortable. I didn't like him either.

In the end we came to a bookshop near Covent Garden. The little Jew marched confidently through the store and upstairs. We came to a door. He gave a complicated knock and it was opened.

An individual who looked like the Hollywood conception of a tough guy blocked the doorway with a few yards of muscle and brawn.

"What do you want?" he demanded truculently.

I was quite willing to let the matter drop, but not my little Jew friend.

"Who wants to know?" he demanded and pushed past Tough Guy.

"Sorry, Comrade, just have to be careful, you know," answered Tough Guy apologetically.

I had learned my first lesson.

Eventually by this process of mysterious door knocking and transfers of guides, all of whom shook hands feelingly on parting and pessimistically wished me good luck, I got to Banin. The Banin. A door was opened carefully and I was thrust in like a Christian martyr being introduced to the lions.

But Banin was only a talker, so that was all right. He talked steadily for about five minutes without saying anything. I didn't mind, for I had my back to a heater and was drying out deliciously.

Suddenly he stopped prattling and cocked a finger at me.

"How many hours have you flown?"

I had to go carefully now. This was going to be an examination of my qualifications and if this man was an expert he would discover in a few moments that I was a very inexperienced pilot. But I had to brazen it through.

"Four hundred and thirty," I lied glibly. I was going to say four hundred, but the extra thirty made it sound more likely.

"Can you do stunts?" he asked cunningly.

I breathed a sigh of relief. The man was no expert. Nobody who knew anything about practical flying would ask if you could do stunts for the simple reason that anyone can do stunts today. Besides that, the word is aerobatics anyway.

I told him I could do "stunts."

"Ah!" he said. "But I mean can you do difficult stunts? Can you loop the loop?"

Now a loop is a good sight easier than a climbing turn, for instance, which is an ordinary maneuver. There is no question but that it is the simplest aerobatic. I began to enjoy myself.

"Oh, yes, I can loop and do stall turns and of course the simpler stunts like slow rolls," I declared.

Now a slow roll was my bugbear. My instructor used to say that he had known pilots who did worse slow rolls but they were all dead.

However, Banin nodded understandingly, and asked me if I understood the instruments of an aeroplane and navigation and things like that.

I assured him that I did and carelessly that I could operate a Course and Distance Calculator. He seemed very impressed.

I didn't think it necessary to tell him that anyone can operate a Course and Distance Calculator after about ten minutes' instruction.

He then confided to me that he didn't do the actual hiring but just interviewed pilots to see if they were good enough to go any further. He added with a chuckle that he didn't know anything about flying at all. I told him I could hardly believe it and to be sure to ask the next aspirant if he could operate a Course and Distance Calculator because it was the sure mark of a good pilot. He thanked me warmly.

I was all dry now and beginning to think this would be easy.

The next man I was passed on to was called "Scotty." I marched into his office confidently expecting another talker. I was wrong.

Scotty was tall and raw-boned with a little bit of black hair on the back of his head. He beckoned me to a chair. He read Banin's report on me.

"Four hundred and thirty hours, aye, that's guid. Where did ye get it?"

"Royal Air Force," I said. "I held a short service commission."

"Did ye serve the full four years?"

I decided to tell the truth and admitted to only serving five months. He discreetly didn't ask me why I left.

He laid down the paper and crossed over to me. He looked me straight in the face seriously.

"It's no picnic ye'll be going to, if ye go, mind ye," he said earnestly. "We've lost four of our ladies in a month. I'm hoping you know what you're in for."

Four in a month! So far it had been rather a lark, but this sudden reminder of death made me think. Did I know what I was going in for? I told him I knew. He seemed satisfied.

"Guid! And when will ye be ready to start?"

"Immediately!" I answered, quite convinced that he'd tell me I had to wait a couple of weeks.

He picked up a long piece of paper and stroked his bony chin with his long fingers.

"Nooooo," he said regretfully. "It's too late to send ye now and tomorrow is Sunday. I'm afraid the earliest we can manage is Monday morning."

I gasped.

"Oh! . . . Monday morning?" I repeated in what I hoped was a disappointed tone. "Well, of course if it can't be done any sooner . . ."

"Ten o'clock, then." Scotty smiled and showed me out.

When I got out into the street I was still a little dazed. In forty-eight hours I told myself I'll be on the way to Spain.

How surprised my friends would be! Bushey would be amused and Tony would be envious and Nick would want to know how much money there was in it and Medora would . . .

What would Medora do?

One afternoon about a month before this, after hours of hopeless wrestling with my epoch-making book, I went for a walk across the Common to get the adjectives brushed out of my brain.

I was striding along through the heather wondering if it wouldn't be better to give up the idea of authorship in favor of something more exciting, when I ran down a girl surrounded by a group of excited dogs all barking furiously. This was Medora.

She was trying to persuade a cocker spaniel to give up something in its mouth. All the other dogs were running about delightedly and egging the cocker on.

I remembered a rule from a book which was going to make a successful author out of me in twenty chapters, three diagrams and a list of publishers: "An author is never lost for suitable mate-

rial for he notices all the stories of human interest he encounters during the day." This one had canine interest at least.

So I tipped my hat, figuratively speaking, for actually I had no hat. (I had sold it the week before to an admiring farmer for two shillings and a cauliflower.) I smiled sweetly. I started to phrase a polite offer of help.

She turned on me impatiently.

"Well, don't just stand there like that! Can't you do something?"

I said that I would gladly do something if I knew what the trouble was.

"Rusty has a thrush in his mouth and he won't give it up and it's not dead!" she told me breathlessly. "He only teases it and won't let go. Can you get it?"

I took the bird from the dog. It was quite dead, but to make sure I wrung its neck. I threw the body away and Rusty caught it happily in his mouth again.

We walked along together . . . and afterwards I often went with her on what she called her "dog-walks." She boarded dogs because she liked them, but to justify herself she claimed that there was a lot of money in it.

"For each one I get seven-and-six a week!" she told me.

I asked her what they cost her.

"Oh, about eight or nine shillings a week."

"Well, where is all the profit?"

"Well, you see," she explained simply, "I haven't got a business head."

I let it go at that.

Two or three times a week she would invite me to tea which was a godsend to me, as I, like the dogs, was also living on eight or nine shillings a week. The teas were nice, although her father always frightened me. I imagined him grunting uncomplimentary remarks about penniless authors after I left. But I braved father for the teas. There was always plenty of bread and butter and jams and cakes and a pot of honey. That pot of honey! They had a big jar on the table with a good half inch of honey in the bottom. After my fourth visit there was only a spoonful left and I looked forward eagerly to next time and a new jar. But next time and ever afterwards there was always the same spoonful. I think they have it still.

I hadn't said anything to Medora about the real reason for my going to London. I had merely told her that I was going up to see about a job and that I would have definite news when I came back.

As I hurried across the downs to her home I pictured to myself how surprised she would be. I expected that she would try to dissuade me. I anticipated being firm.

She was standing in front of the fire warming

her hands when I came in. All the dogs were grouped about her adoringly. She had evidently just come in from one of her long walks for the rain still clung to her. She turned to me enthusiastically.

"Did you get the job?" she asked.

The rough tweeds she habitually wore accentuated her boyish figure. She looked severely simple, straight and proud. Straightness, it suddenly struck me, was her synonym. Her hair and nose were straight, her glance was straight and her little body was straight and hard.

I told her all about it. She never said a word until I had finished. Then she asked one question.

"Peter," she said, looking right through me. "Do you think that you're doing right?"

That was something I didn't want to think about too much. I defended myself hurriedly. I was going to free Spain from the clutches of Fascism, that was a phrase I had heard somewhere.

"I wonder whether I'd be of any use to them, Peter?"

"Would you come?" I asked, surprised.

"You know I'd come with you like a shot if you wanted me to."

The next night we got a lift to London with some friends.

Scotty wished me luck and handed me twenty pounds, a ticket to Paris and an envelope of sealed instructions. I was to read them in Paris.

I asked him what the salary was.

"Twenty-five pounds a week and a thousand to your relatives, if they get you," he said carelessly.

He walked down to the door with me and shook hands.

"And if ye shouldn't get to that address the first thing tomorrow, I don't expect it will matter much," he told me with a wink. "I think the war will wait until Wednesday, if ye'd like a day in Paris."

We caught the train from Victoria and went to Calais and from there to Paris. It was late at night when we arrived. We went and had an omelette.

Chapter Two

I TOLD Medora that we could spend the first day in Paris however we liked. I offered to show her anything she wanted to see. There was no part of Paris I told her, modestly, that I didn't know. What would she like to see?

She said that many years ago she had been taken in a taxi across the city from one station to another on her way to Switzerland. During that ride they had passed a long street of pet shops with all kinds of animals displayed on the pavement. They had no time to stop then, but she had always sworn that if she ever returned to Paris she would go immediately to that fascinating street.

So we went down by the banks of the river and found the animal shops. At first she was content to walk up and down and look at all the creatures

yearningly, until we came to one with a window full of beautiful canaries. We must go in, she said, and see how much one canary cost.

Once inside I relaxed my vigilance for a moment and they sold her a monkey.

"Peter," she called sweetly, "do come and look at this adorable little monkey. And it's only four hundred francs!"

I pleaded and bullied without the slightest effect. I learned that you can't change Medora's mind about an animal. In the end we left the shop with the monkey and the only consolation I had was that they had come down to two hundred and fifty.

The hotel didn't think much of the idea; as a matter of fact they threw us out. But at the next one we just didn't say anything about Rumpelstiltskin.

That night I decided as a special treat to show Medora how delicious a real French dinner can be. I took her to a famous restaurant and what a dinner I had! Medora thought everything except the chicken and mashed potatoes was foul. The poor waiter thought there was something wrong with the food as course after course was scornfully sent back to the kitchen. He was nearly in tears by the time the end of the meal came. The fact that I put away great quantities of everything didn't matter. I, no doubt, was an English-

man and everybody knew that Englishmen just ate what was put in front of them, but Madame was certainly a connoisseur and the chef must be slipping.

When we got outside Medora turned upon me scornfully.

"Do you mean to say you really like that stuff better than good old English roast beef?" she said witheringly.

The address that I had to go to was a bookshop near the Gare du Nord. I turned up here at ten o'clock the next morning and told the proprietor, as per sealed instructions, that I had a letter for Comrade Le Gros. The man dropped his deferential attitude and put his finger to his lips.

"Shhhhh!" he said, and when I started to speak: "Shhhhh!" I looked around the shop. As nearly as I could see we were absolutely alone, but he made sure. Then he beckoned me to follow him into a back room.

"Let me see the letter!"

I gave it to him and he seemed disappointed that it was sealed. He looked at the back and front and along the edge hopefully. Then he told me to take it outside, turn in at the first door on the right and ask again for Comrade Le Gros, only this time, he begged, not to say it so loud.

I found the place and walked in only to be met

by a large door of iron bars, like a cell door, which wouldn't budge when I pushed it. A voice asked me what I wanted and I looked up to see a man in a mirror looking at me. He was evidently sitting by the side of the door.

The French do this sort of thing so much more thoroughly than we do. After I had given my credentials through the bars the door swung open. It was electrically controlled from the desk at which the second man sat. Here were all the accouterments of a good spy story.

After a long wait I finally got my letter read by somebody else and stamped. I was given another address to go to. This was a big house of offices and I was to go to room twenty, walk in and ask for Comrade Le Gros.

I got outside and joined Medora who had been waiting across the street and we found the second place. I sat her at a sidewalk café and went in to find room twenty.

I walked in without knocking. There were about four cutthroats draped about the room, a gray-haired man at a desk and a girl secretary.

One of the cutthroats put himself between me and the door.

"Is he here, the Comrade Le Gros?" I asked in my English-French.

Instantly there was pandemonium. A man

jumped for the door and locked it. They were all standing. The gray-haired one spoke heatedly.

"He is not here! He has nothing to do with us! We do not know him! I myself have never heard the name! It is the wrong man! What do you want to see him for?"

"I was told to ask for him, that's all. If he's not here, I'll go back and tell them that."

I started for the door. The man standing in front of it didn't move. I was annoyed at all this play-acting and I remembered how the tough guy in London had been treated. I pushed him gently aside and unlocked the door.

"A moment, Monsieur," the gray-haired one called out. "Are you alone?"

I told him that I was. He ordered one of the others to go downstairs and see if there was anyone hanging about.

I wondered what would happen if they spotted Medora. In a minute he came back and reported that it was all right. I was quite alone.

"Now can I see him?" I asked.

"I am the Comrade Le Gros," said the gray-haired man. "Who sent you?"

I told him and gave him my credentials. He read them carefully and then asked me a few questions about London and the bookshop near Covent Garden. He seemed satisfied and took me down-

stairs to a little hut in the courtyard where I was to sign on.

I signed some long sheets of paper covered with names and was told to report at another address the following night at six.

As Comrade Le Gros seemed more friendly now I took the opportunity of telling him about Medora. I explained that she was my wife and that she wanted to do nursing.

He was very kind, but said it was impossible. He introduced me to a little German doctor who would be going to Spain with me.

"This one," he said, pointing to the German doctor, "has a wife who is also a doctor and we cannot allow even her to go. Please tell your brave wife this."

When Medora heard this she was disappointed and immediately began talking of dressing as a man and going as a volunteer. But I explained that this was impossible and in the end persuaded her to go to a little fishing village in the south of France that I knew. This was St. Tropez, and she was to wait there until I could send for her.

We had one more day in Paris together and we made the best of it.

The next address was difficult to find and the house even harder to enter. There seemed no one about in authority. I didn't want to risk getting

into trouble by showing my credentials to the wrong man, so I finally made my way in the front door behind two or three other men and followed them downstairs to a big room.

Here was the choicest selection of Parisian sewer dregs that I had ever seen. They were all different shapes and sizes like the rats of Hamelin. I wandered about without anyone taking the slightest notice of me.

In the end I saw a man at a desk up to whom every newcomer went and gave his name. I went up and showed my slip of paper; and he took me through a curtain at his rear and I went down some steps through a hole in the floor to an old cellar.

The first thing I heard was an ear-cracking yell from a couple of hundred closely packed men. The leader was standing on the table shouting and gesticulating wildly. He was working up the others to a fever pitch of excitement and they were ready to defend Madrid right then.

Finally he finished with a magnificent gesture, pointing upstairs, and they all tore up the ladder breathing hard and singing the Internationale. It was the first time I had heard the tune and I liked it.

I signed more papers and was given fifty francs and told to be at the station at ten o'clock.

I went back to the hotel and said good-by to Medora and Rumpelstiltskin, the Parisian monkey.

At the station there were two hundred of us all waiting. One hundred and ninety-seven Apaches, two German doctors and I. One of the German doctors was the little fellow I had met. He introduced me to the other, a younger man. We went to have a drink to pass the time away.

They were both very quiet. I opened the conversation cheerily.

"So you're Germans, are you? I rather like Germans."

They agreed that they were flattered and that they liked Englishmen. We were getting along fine.

"Yes," I continued. "Germany has the best beer in the world."

They looked doubtful. One said mournfully, "Perhaps in the past, but not any more. The beer is no good in Germany now."

I was surprised to meet a German who didn't swear that there was no beer but German beer.

"Why is that?" I asked.

They looked surprised that I shouldn't know.

"Hitler!" said one fiercely.

The other just spat.

Chapter Three

THE German doctors and I found a corner of the carriage as far as possible from the wild crowd of volunteers in order to try to get some sleep. The others sang songs the whole night long.

I was jarred to wakefulness about seven the next morning. We'd been speeding south for eight hours and the countryside began to show signs of the change.

Later it grew slightly warmer, the sky became clearer and bluer, and as the day dragged on I caught glimpses of white cottages and palm trees and other signs of a country without a winter. The sunshine blazed into the tightly packed carriage and thawed us out. At least I am sure my comrades were thawing out, from the smell. I began to prefer the cold.

As we drew nearer to Perpignan, I could see that the people in this part of France were more aware of the war as an actuality than the Parisian. The laborers along the railway track knew that these wildly singing men were on their way to the war. As we flashed past, the workers in the fields stopped their labor for a minute and turned to the train, saluting with the clenched fist of the communist.

At Perpignan station we were met by a big man with a red beard who told us that the utmost secrecy must prevail. We were to walk casually outside in twos and threes and quietly get into the buses that were there waiting for us. We were not to attract any attention.

Well, I did my best. I wandered out of the station looking as though I didn't know there was a war in Spain.

But behind me came a column of about fifty, marching in pairs, fists clenched and held high, singing the Internationale. Their leader was a huge man named Jean who had been pleasantly pie-eyed since we left. He scorned the idea of secrecy and was setting out to let all of southern France know we were coming.

The station guard grinned and returned the salute. Several people stopped and stared and a gendarme carefully turned his back on us.

With some attempt at stealth we entered through a hole in the wall. The place had evidently

been used as a headquarters for some time. There were several dirty mattresses lying about the enclosed courtyard and a large wooden table with two bowls of steaming stew. A pile of loaves in a corner and a mountain of dirty tin dishes by a well were our invitation to dinner.

But we were hungry and grabbed the dishes, washed them after a fashion and ate our stew. It was good stew.

Afterwards a sudden whoop from Big Jean let us all know that he had discovered something. It was beer for sale. As everyone had been given fifty francs in Paris it sold well. The crowd began to get merry.

Somebody suggested a little knife throwing to relieve the boredom. About a dozen of them formed a game and the rest of us sat cross-legged in a circle around them. The target was an empty cigarette packet stuck in a big tree. A line was drawn about thirty feet away.

The first was a little fellow named Louis. He stood on the line and squinted comically at the target. Then he lifted his right hand up to his head quickly and scratched his ear. This byplay was greeted with roars of laughter. He had no knife in his hand and I wondered what he was doing.

Suddenly his hand came down sharply to his side. There was a flash and a thud and a nasty-looking knife was sticking in the tree about six inches

above the cigarette packet. I looked at the little man with more respect.

This went on for some time. Some carried a knife up their sleeve and others in a neck holster. They were all much too accurate for one to want to offend them.

At half past seven the order came to fall in and march outside to more buses. About half of the volunteers were so badly drunk they had to be half carried to the buses. Big Jean started singing and we rolled out of Perpignan making more noise than the war. We were supposed to be stealthily leaving for the front under cover of darkness.

In about an hour we reached the frontier. The bus lights were turned out and we became quiet. Even the drunks were impressed by the nearness of the war.

We rumbled slowly along to the sentry boxes. Our bus was in the lead. We stopped and I could hear the driver answering the guard's questions. This was the French frontier and officially closed to volunteers to Spain. But from the guard's attitude it was obvious that he knew who we were. He didn't ask any embarrassing questions.

At this point Jean awoke from his drunken sleep and started to sing softly one of the Communist songs. There was a broken chorus of hisses, orders to shut up and some drunken accompaniment.

The guard smiled and waved us on. As we passed his right fist came up in the now familiar salute.

A few minutes later we had passed the Spanish frontier and were roaring down a wide road. Some of the drunks were sobering up a little now and the singing was unanimous.

An hour later the driver told us that we were approaching Figueras, where we would be billeted for the night. Then we turned off the main road and started to climb the streets that ran uphill to the top of the town. We came out on the center street or Rambla where, as always in Spain, the señoritas were promenading.

Big Jean couldn't let all those señoritas walk about without knowing that he had come to win the war for them. In a second he had swung his huge body out of the window and hoisted himself upon the roof. He stood up and somehow kept his balance on the swaying bus.

Then he started to sing. This was too much for the rest of us. Big Jean was getting all the attention. Soon we were all climbing out of the window and upon the roof. We grouped ourselves about him.

The villagers responded with salutes and encouraging yells. The señoritas threw us hysterical kisses.

Truly, I thought, the life of a soldier of fortune is sweet!

The bus swung off the Rambla and started up

the long steep hill to the fort. This was called the Fort of San Fernando. The buses passed over the moat and through the big open gates. We were deposited in the middle of a huge square.

There were a few soldiers standing about who looked at us, mildly curious. But there didn't seem to be anyone in authority. We milled about in uncertain groups. The irrepressible Jean started to sing again, but for once he was shut up.

The crowd quieted down. This, I thought, was bad for the morale.

A fiery little man came out from under one of the arches and jumped up on a large stone. He held up his hand for absolute quiet. The talking stopped. For a long minute he was silent, looking at us appraisingly. The mob began to wriggle uncomfortably.

Suddenly he threw up his hand in the Red salute.

"Comrades," he yelled. "*Salud!*"

The effect was all he expected. A moment's silence, then wild cheering. When they got tired of yelling he gave a short speech.

It seemed that for a day or two at least we would have to stay in the fort to be trained. But he hoped that we would be happy. Anything at all we wanted we had but to ask for. The people of the village, as indeed the people of Spain, were grateful to their brave comrades from France. And so on.

It was a great speech and it went down fine. He had everyone thinking what a fine fellow he was. Then he finished on exactly the right note by telling us that dinner was ready.

We had more stew and bread plus a large bowl of coarse red wine. The wine burned its way down like whisky and completed the good impression the commandant had made.

After dinner we were shown where we were to sleep. The wine on top of the beer had made me so sleepy that I threw myself on one of the lice-infested mattresses and was asleep before the hungry animals had got to work.

I awoke at about half past two when the effects of the wine had worn off. It was a bright moonlight night and I could see the lice at work on the man next to me. They were crawling over his face. Then I knew what it was that was attached to the back of my neck drinking my blood.

I finished the night on the grass outside, for I hadn't yet become hardened to the vermin.

Chapter Four

THE next day my group spent the entire time digging themselves in as though they anticipated a long stay. I was sure that we were to be moved to the front that day and I took the opportunity of looking the place over.

The fort was called El Castillo de San Fernando. It was on the top of a hill and had a magnificent view. On one side were the snow-capped Pyrenees stretching away to France. On the other was the Mediterranean as blue as the postcards. The town of Figueras, a mass of white tumble-down buildings, lay at the bottom of the hill. All this could be seen from the top of the massive walls, so wide that a car could have been driven around them.

The fort itself consisted of about thirty large buildings enclosing many large and small squares.

Everything was ruinous and some of the walls were falling in. I guessed that the fort had lain unused for years and was only now being renovated.

Our sleeping quarters were the old prisons. These and the dining hall in the front were the only buildings in use except an old barber shop which had been converted into a canteen.

The canteen was run by beautiful Rosita and her mother. Rosita was everyone's favorite and because of her the canteen was always crowded. Here the soldiers could buy sausages and bread and wine and some liquors. They could get cigarettes and writing paper and books. They could get fresh figs and grapes and mandarins. In fact they could get anything they wanted except Rosita. She had to be won. And with five hundred competitors continually changing it was a good man who got the prize!

For the first two days I was contented to lie naked in the sun eating too many ripe figs. Every minute I thought that we would be ordered to the front. But when the third day came and still there was no sign of anything happening I went to see the commandant.

He listened patiently while I asked him why, if they were in such need of pilots, I had to stay in this delightful fort. He explained that we were waiting for another group of volunteers from

Paris. These would be the Deuxième Groupe de Norde and they would join my group, the Première Groupe de Norde, and we would all go to the front together.

I suggested that I, as a pilot who did not belong to the Parisian group, might be permitted to go ahead to the front. I offered to pay for my own ticket.

The little commandant looked sly.

"Oh, no, Englishman. It is much better that you go when the others go."

I asked when that would be.

"Who knows? Perhaps tomorrow or next week. Wait and see."

"Well, meanwhile can I go to the village? Is there any reason why I have to be confined to the fort?"

"There is every reason, Englishman. It is impossible to allow you to go to the village."

I consoled myself with the thought that the commandant probably did have a very good reason for keeping us all in. I did want to get down to the village, but I couldn't see how it was to be done. The walls were too high to jump from and too smooth to climb down. The guards at the gate only let the officers in the army past.

A little later, when I was standing about near the entrance, I saw Karl, the German doctor, come in from outside with a basket of food.

I followed him to his room.

"How is it you can get out and I can't?" I asked.

"The commandant trusts us, but he doesn't trust you. There is something wrong with your papers."

This was rather a shock and I tried to find out more from him. But he refused to say anything beyond warning me to avoid getting into trouble.

That evening just before supper I noticed a group of young soldiers walk out of the gate toward the village. I asked myself what identifying marks they had in order to get past the guard. It wasn't their uniforms, for they all wore different bits of uniform. They had nothing in common except that they all wore hats shaped like an English Air Force officer's field cap. But these were of different colors according to the unit of the wearer.

It was these hats that gave me my bright idea. I had my Air Force officer's cap with me. Why not put it on and try to bluff the sentries?

I chose a time when the commandant was not near and then with my cap set jauntily over my eye I marched confidently out of the front gate. It worked like a charm. The two sentries looked as respectful as a Spanish soldier possibly can.

As soon as I got round the bend of the road and out of sight of the fort, I ran all the way down the hill toward the welcoming sounds of the village.

The Rambla was full of young couples and the

sidewalk cafés were crammed with Spain's ever present, always gallant, old men. I chose the largest and brightest café and had the best food for a week.

Afterwards I walked about exploring the town. I went to the cinema and discovered the pleasant Spanish custom of having an hour's break between the pictures while the audience danced. After the picture I went to a gambling place and lost a few pesos.

Here there were a lot of soldiers from the fort and I saw them looking curiously at my hat. I could see they were puzzled and after a little while one of them came over to me.

"Excuse me, señor, but what is that hat?" he asked politely.

I told him that it was a British hat and he asked if he could look at it. I gave it to him and it went the rounds. Everyone had a look. They seemed most interested in the crowns. I got it back all right but something in their attitude made me wonder what was wrong.

After that the hat always worked like a charm. I went and came at will. I spent all my evenings in the village and soon everyone got to know me. I was called *El Capitán de Londres*. Occasionally I would run into the soldiers, but they never spoke to me again.

One afternoon after lunch when I went to the

canteen to get my usual coffee and anise from Rosita, I noticed about a dozen of these soldiers who looked as though they were waiting for me. As I came in the conversation stopped suddenly. It looked like trouble.

I chatted pleasantly to Rosita, but she seemed constrained and kept looking at the soldiers. Then she bent over and whispered to me.

"They don't like your hat, *Capitán*. They say it is Fascist. You had better go because they mean trouble."

But even if I had wanted to follow her advice I couldn't for the soldiers evidently guessed what she was saying and they moved over to me. The leader pointed to my hat.

"There are no crowns in Spain now, comrade. We want no royalty. Crowns are Fascist."

"This hat," I explained, "is English. England is not Fascist. I am not Fascist. The hat is not Fascist." I thought that was rather well put, but they didn't appreciate it.

"The crowns are a Fascist emblem. Take them off or we will take them off for you."

They moved a little closer.

"Go ahead!" I challenged.

They did.

Everything moved so quickly and it was all over so soon that I have only the vaguest idea of what happened. The first soldier made a grab at my hat

and I hit him. He went down. Somebody else clutched at it and I turned to get at him. My hat was knocked spinning, and as I turned again, I felt a smashing blow on the side of the head.

I woke up on the floor. I started to scramble to my feet, but they held me down. I fumed and glared at them. Everyone was laughing except one whose nose was gushing good red blood. I felt a little better.

The three crowns off my hat were lying on the floor; the soldiers were stamping them to powder. Rosita had rescued the hat and was sewing on two plain khaki buttons.

I managed to get to my feet. I looked about truculently wondering what on earth I'd do next. Nobody seemed the least bit perturbed.

One of them gallantly returned the hat, saying something about their not having anything against the owner and would I excuse the necessary mutilation for I was a fine fellow and would I have a drink?

I drank.

Then they had another. We all ended up shaking hands, the best of friends.

All except the one with the bleeding nose who left without speaking to anyone. I tried to say something to him, but missed him in the excitement.

I saw him just as he went out of the door. He turned and looked back at me poisonously.

Chapter Five

I HADN'T seen Karl or Frank, the German doctors, for some days. After the first night they exercised their influence and now slept away from the common herd. They had converted two of the old solitary confinement cells into an apartment and were luxuriously comfortable there. The cells looked out on a little courtyard with the remains of a fountain in the middle. It was so swank that I hadn't dared to visit them.

But the morning after my little fracas in the canteen I was awakened by Karl shaking my shoulders. I opened my eyes dreamily to see him peering anxiously over the half moons of his thick spectacles. He spoke in his heavy, careful English.

"Ach, Peter, what happened last night? What have you done?"

I told him the whole story. He listened without commenting except to cluck despairingly once or twice.

"It is no joke, my young friend," he said, checking my laughter. "The soldier has told the commandant that you are a Fascist spy!"

I was incredulous.

"Well, it is true that you sit in a café and write, write all the time in a little red notebook, isn't it? What do you write?"

I knew that I had done this many times, but it never occurred to me that it would appear suspicious. I explained to Karl that in order to pass the time, I amused myself by writing short sketches of people and things. The book contained some Spanish vocabulary, some diary notes, addresses, a street map of Figueras, and a half-finished short story about the revolution. As I was telling this it occurred to me how suspicious all that might look to a bystander.

I finished up by saying that I was perfectly willing to show the book to the commandant.

But that wasn't all. Was it also true that I had roamed all over the village without permission? Walked completely around the fort from the outside? Been along the highway in the direction of France until a sentry turned me back? Had I not gone into the prohibited telegraph office?

I realized then that someone had been keeping a

careful watch on my movements. Although these were perfectly innocent, I thought that I had better see the commandant.

But here a difficulty arose, for Karl had come directly from the commandant to warn me, and if I turned up and began asking embarrassing questions, he would know that I had been warned. I arranged to see him on some other pretext and trust to luck that he would take the opportunity to question me.

I got in to see the little fire-eater all right. He glowered at me full of unfriendliness and suspicion.

I said that I had come to ask if there were any news of when we were to move up to the front.

He pushed back his chair and regarded me thoughtfully for a minute or two. I smiled in what I hoped was an innocent and disarming manner.

"Why are you so interested, Englishman?"

"Because I want to get to the front. I'm sick of hanging about here."

"Well, we expect the second detachment this afternoon. If they arrive safely, you will all leave for Albacete tomorrow morning. Is that all right?"

I said it suited me fine.

"Why have you been fighting in the canteen? Causing trouble among the soldiers, eh?"

I began to explain that but he cut me short.

"Let me see your papers, please."

I gave him my passport, letter of introduction, flying license, and my logbook.

"Would you mind turning out your pockets?"

I swallowed my anger and turned out my pockets. All that I hadn't given him was my wallet containing about ten pounds and a handful of visiting cards.

He deposited everything in a drawer and told me he would return them after he had examined them.

I realized there was nothing I could say to that and so I agreed sweetly and went back to my bunk.

I found my notebook and looked at it. It seemed harmless enough. I wondered if it would be better to destroy it or take it to the commandant. I decided against either course, for I didn't want to draw attention to it.

I put it in my pocket and started out of the fort.

The new volunteers were just arriving. I joined the crowd that was gathered around the buses.

They were singing just as we had done and they were as drunk as we had been. They tumbled eagerly out of their buses, shouting to each other, excited to be in Spain.

Suddenly I noticed three girls standing quietly at ease in the middle of the crowd of nearly a thousand men. They were tall and wiry with weather-beaten faces. They wore riding breeches

and boots and open-necked flaming shirts. Each girl carried a businesslike rifle lightly in her hand and a belt of ammunition wound twice around her slim waist.

I was intrigued with them. How did they ever get to Spain, reputed to be impossible for a woman to enter now?

I went over to them and spoke to one who looked like the leader. I asked her where she came from. She regarded me suspiciously for a moment and then decided to take a chance that I wasn't trying to flirt with her.

"We come from Switzerland, Monsieur. We are sharpshooters of the popular army."

She announced the fact proudly but calmly as though it were a natural thing that women should come to war and bring their own rifles.

We talked for a time and I told her that we would probably go to Albacete the next day.

She said that she and the other two women were Swiss communists who had persuaded the authorities to allow them to go to the front as snipers because of their skill with a rifle.

I asked her if she understood how dangerous it was to be a sniper.

"They will get us in the end, of course, but we will get many of them first so we will win the game," she explained simply.

"And you are quite willing to give your lives?"

"Of course! There are many who give so much more," she answered hotly.

While I was still puzzling over this the little commandant climbed on his soap-box and delivered his stereotyped speech of welcome. It worked as well with them as it had with us. It was a good speech and it probably still serves to greet foreign volunteers.

The girls were the center of attraction as soon as word of their arrival got around. I had no other opportunity to speak to them that night.

They went to bed in the common sleeping room. They were as safe as possible for every man there was waiting to prove himself a knight by beating off somebody else. The three girls slept blissfully, conscious of the safety of numbers.

In the morning the news went round that we were moving up to Albacete. Everyone packed his things and turned up early for breakfast.

The commandant made another little speech.

At ten o'clock we were all to make a great parade down the hill and through the village to the station where a special train would be waiting for us. Every group was to make its own banner and elect a carrier. The parade was to be a display of the size and variety of the foreign volunteers, and he especially asked that the banners be large and striking.

This idea met with great approval and half of the men tore off immediately to get first choice of materials for the flags.

I followed the commandant to his office and asked if I could have my papers back. I refrained from mentioning the money.

He said that he would give them back to me at the station. I had to be content with that.

At ten o'clock we were all ready with our banners and our groups. The gates were thrown open and the long straggling line started to march down the hill.

As I was of no particular division I marched in front with the Swiss girls and Karl and Frank. Immediately behind us came Big Jean and Louis the knife-thrower, staggering under the burden of an immense two-handled banner which screamed "PREMIÈRE GROUPE DE NORDE!" It had been made out of an old tent.

This was the best effort. Behind them were many others. Brussels, Amsterdam, Lyon, Marseille, etc., all had their representatives.

I rather regretted not making myself a banner with something like "LE PREMIÈRE DU PREMIÈRE GROUPE DE LONDRES" on it!

As we approached the village we could see the streets and windows were crowded with everyone left in Figueras. They were cheering wildly. The children ran in front of us shouting, the women

wept and waved handkerchiefs, the old men sang with us.

We marched down the center of the first wide road, turned left at the Rambla and continued our triumphant procession down one side and up the other. The crowd wasn't quite large enough to line the whole route. But they made up for that ingeniously. As soon as the last of us passed them they broke and ran round the back and formed in front of us again.

We, not to be outdone, marched around the square and caught up with our own tail thus creating an unending line. We marched past the same spot twice so that the villagers thought that we were double the number. They in turn cheered us from several different places so that we believed that there was a huge crowd. A good time was had by all!

Marching like that between the madly cheering crowds, I got some idea of the terrible power of mob hysteria during war. Despite the fact that I recognized the artificially cultivated excitement, I felt myself being dragged into the maelstrom of war fever until I too was strutting proudly at the thought of going to the war.

The station. An unruly crowd of excited volunteers. There was no lavatory and the Frenchmen whose kidneys are always their masters broke into

the pretty little park to relieve themselves. The park keeper ran about distracted, begging them to go out into the road. They only laughed and down went the flowers in the storm.

A wine shop was discovered, exploited, overrun, smashed. The commandant said we could have anything we liked. . . .

More speeches. "Wait, Comrades, until you get to Albacete." That did not work. Somebody had an idea.

There were not enough seats for everyone; some would have to stand and it is a long uncomfortable journey. A mad scramble for the train. Clever man!

The train was brilliantly colored, painted with zigzag stripes so that the Fascists could not see it. Also there were ugly caricatures to frighten them if they did.

I staked a claim to my seat, slung my suitcases up on the luggage rack and settled down. Then I remembered the commandant with my papers and money.

He wasn't in sight and I spent a precious ten minutes trying to find him in the conglomerate crowd. I began to worry.

A large bulbous-stomached Don was bellowing orders, which nine out of ten didn't hear and the tenth ignored. I got up to him by hard work.

"Where is the commandant?" I shouted, prodding him in the stomach.

"He has gone back to the fort. Why do you want him?" he bellowed in reply.

"He said he would give me my papers now. Have you got them?"

"No. I don't know anything about them."

"Who is in charge?"

"I am in charge," indignantly.

"How long before the train leaves?"

I was rapidly calculating my chance to get to the fort and back. It was a good mile and a half away, but obviously I couldn't land in Albacete without money or credentials.

He said that I had half an hour. I might just do it.

I pushed my way out of the station. I wondered if I could make it. If I only had a car or a horse or a . . .

A large and important policeman was resting his bicycle against the railings. He walked towards the crowd. I moved towards the bicycle, fascinated.

It was such a fast-looking bicycle!

Chapter Six

I PEDALED through the town, and as I shot through the market place, I could hear signs of pursuit behind me. The policeman had discovered the theft and was following me on someone else's bicycle.

I roared up the deserted Rambla, coat tails flying, precious hat bouncing. As I rounded the last corner, I could see the policeman and several others following.

Somehow I got up the long hill and gained considerably on my policeman who was rather fat. I pushed my way past the sentries and burst into the commandant's office breathlessly. He didn't look too pleased to see me.

"My papers! My papers! Give them to me quick! The train . . ."

"I am sending your papers ahead by post," he said angrily. "They will need investigation."

"Oh? And my money? Does that also need investigation?" I was angry now. "What do you mean by not giving me back my money? Is this the way you treat volunteers?"

"I had forgotten," he said with great dignity. He took my wallet out of a drawer and gave it to me. "Of course, I would have sent it on to Albacete."

I stuffed the wallet into my pocket and started out of the door. I ran into the arms of the perspiring policeman who clutched me tightly and turned to the commandant.

"Commandant, this man stole my bicycle, stole my bicycle, commandant! He ran away, commandant! On my bicycle, commandant . . ."

"Shut up, fool!" roared the little soldier. Here was someone he could vent his anger on.

The policeman let me go and stood muttering unkind things to himself.

"Go!" said the commandant to me. "Take his bicycle and make that train!"

The ride back was all downhill and I made very good time. As I approached the station I was glad to see I had not been quite twenty-five minutes. But surely everything was strangely quiet?

I put the policeman's bike up against the railings

and hurried into the station. The fat Don and some others were just leaving.

"Hello," he said genially. "Why didn't you go? The train left five minutes ago."

"But you told me it would not go for half an hour!" I spluttered.

"Oh, well, never mind," he smiled. "There is always another train in Spain."

I hurried into the ticket office. The next train for Albacete? Tomorrow afternoon. A ticket? Where was my military pass? My passport? No passport, no military pass? No ticket.

I was writing again and the gentleman at the next table was very interested to see what it was. He looked over my shoulder, but he couldn't understand it for it was in English.

This is what he saw:

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION

1. I have missed the train to the front.
2. That means that I must go to the little commandant at the fort and tell him, for I cannot get out of town without a military pass.
3. That means that he will think that I missed the train intentionally so as to stay in Figueras and finish my spying.

4. That means that I will be confined to the fort until the next detachment of volunteers.
5. And all being well, that cannot be less than a week and if I am unlucky it may be two.
6. Meanwhile all my baggage is on the troop train bound for Albacete.

The situation looked bad. But as I saw it there was nothing else I could do but report to the commandant. But first I had a letter to post while it was still possible.

I called for writing materials and the gentleman behind me looked interested. Two more men were playing chess on the other side of me. Did I imagine it or were they more interested in me than their game? I must have been getting jumpy.

I wrote to Medora telling her that she had better go back to England, for things were not turning out so well. I said that the promised twenty-five pounds a week looked extremely doubtful. Anyway it was no country for a woman without connections. Everything was in such a mess she would probably be sent to the front.

I went out to post this letter and the gentleman behind me also went out. I dropped the letter in the box and came back in the café. I would have one good meal before going to the fort.

"Waiter," I said, "bring me a ham omelette and a . . ."

The gentleman touched me on the shoulder. The two playing chess came over to my table. The first one turned back his coat lapel to show me a badge.

"I am sorry but I must ask you to come with me to the Police Station to answer a few questions."

He spoke so quietly that no one in the café noticed anything wrong.

I stood up and the two chess players escorted me efficiently outside to a waiting car. We slid quietly away.

That was my arrest. No noise, no fuss, no bother.

Chapter Seven

THE Chief of Police was a dapper young man manicuring his nails. He asked me curtly who I was.

I told him.

He got up and shook hands as though to apologize for his former rudeness.

Did I have a passport? Or perhaps a military pass? Or some credentials?

I felt a bit awkward. I explained that the commandant at the fort had my papers.

Well, he would send a policeman up to find out all about it. If I would just write my name on a piece of paper?

The policeman took the paper and started for the fort. I relaxed. The young Chief offered me coffee and we sat and talked in our mixture of

French and English. I found that all the Spanish spoke French and some English. All my subsequent conversations with officials were carried on in this jargon. He asked me several questions about flying which at the time I thought showed an intelligent layman's interest. Later I realized he was skillfully testing me.

Would I have any objection to answering a few questions? No? Good.

It had been reported that I spent a good deal of my time in a café writing in a little book. Why?

I said that as I had no one with whom I could talk I amused myself by writing down impressions of everything I saw with a view to writing articles when I returned to England.

What kind of articles? Political?

Oh, no. Articles which would show the people of England how the people of Spain, of Figueras, were acting under the terrible strain of civil war.

That pleased him. But why did I draw maps?

I explained that the maps were an aid to my memory.

He seemed satisfied. After a time the officer came back from the fort. He reported quickly and, although I didn't understand a word he said, I could see that the general impression was not favorable to me. I had a nasty feeling that something had gone wrong.

It had.

The dapper young man's smile vanished and he snapped out an order. I was grabbed protestingly and searched. Everything in my pockets was turned out on the table. They carefully examined my notebook, treating it as a great find. My wallet was returned immediately.

I demanded to know what the trouble was.

He turned and glared at me.

"You have lied to us. The commandant at the fort knows nothing about you. He has never heard of you. He has no papers of yours. He had noticed you at the café and prowling about the fort. He agrees that you are probably a spy!"

As they didn't speak English, they couldn't understand what I said about my friend the commandant.

At the town jail I was delivered into the hands of the most evil-looking, dirtiest, rat-faced little man I have ever seen. This was the jailer. He searched me again in front of the two policemen who had escorted me there. When my little hoard of English money came to light, I could see them all looking envious. Only the fact that they didn't trust each other prevented them from keeping it.

They put me in number twelve. The door swung protestingly open and the stench that escaped nearly knocked me down. Don't worry, they told me grimly, you will get used to that.

We picked our way over the collection of debris that occupied the cell and I was graciously given permission to sit on the bed, a folding plank complete with greasy blanket. The jailer went out and locked me in the dark. But he returned in a minute pushing another prisoner along in front of him. This one carried a broom and a vacuous expression.

The kind jailer kicked him a few times and he went to work sweeping out my cell. Then the jailer caught him behind the neck and flung him out. I wondered if all this was for the purpose of making me understand discipline.

My keeper paused at the door and bowed.

"*Buenas noches, señor,*" he said with what he probably thought was a smile.

I lay in the dark for a minute and suddenly a light in my cell roof was turned on. It was a very dim light, but I could just make out some writings on the wall. I peered at them hopefully.

One announced that Juan Pino had killed his brother and spent three months in this cell before they killed him. He called upon all future occupants to judge if that was fair. His brother had been killed instantly but he had first of all to spend three months in this little room before they killed him. It was a bad bargain.

Another asked me if it was not a glorious thing to die for one's principles?

Just then the light went out and I fell asleep.

In the morning there was a frenzied banging on my cell door and a small partition fell downwards making a tray. I got up to see what would happen next. Somebody put a tin bowl of dark liquid through the hole on the tray, with a half a loaf of bread. The liquid was coffee, hot and welcome. The only fault I could find with it was that the tin bowl had been used to serve beans last and the kitchen had not thought it necessary to wash the plate. But the bits of beans floating about gave it rather a novel flavor.

The daylight was struggling through the dirty glass of my window about ten feet up on the far wall. I climbed up to the sill and cleaned the window with some paper and a corner of the blanket. The window was barred of course and looked out on to a bleak courtyard.

I could now see my new home a little better. It was a single cell about seven feet wide, twenty feet long and twelve feet high. The roof was arched and the whole thing was of white stone.

Attached to one wall was a plank which let down to make the shelf that I slept on. During the day it was possible to fix it up against the wall to give a little elbow room. The door was of heavy, dark metal-studded wood, containing the little aperture through which I got my food, and just above it a small sliding peephole shutter

through which I could unsuspectingly be watched.

Next to the door was the cause of the foul smell; a lavatory bowel, or rather hole, for it dropped down into a black pit from which hundreds of small flies were continually emerging to inspect me.

I solved this problem by taking the top off the china float chamber and using it to cover the objectionable opening. This soon relieved the atmosphere and I began to feel better.

At about two there was another knock at the door and again the little trap fell down. This time it was a steaming hot bowl of stew. I was very hungry and grabbed it immediately, the metal plate was scalding and the next moment I was standing in a pool of stew, blowing on my burnt fingers.

There was a roar of laughter from outside and the door slammed. I went lunchless that day.

The prisoner with the vacuous expression was shoved in at five and swept the cell out some more. He kept smiling at me foolishly. I nicknamed him the Italian prisoner because he was always singing extracts from Italian operas.

I had no food all the day and became faint with hunger. I was just about ready to start shouting for food when at about nine that night the big door opened and the jailer came in with a tray. A bowl of stew and a loaf of bread. I wolfed the food.

I wiped the plate clean with a crust of bread. I thanked the jailer and told him he was a good chap.

He smiled ingratiatingly and reminded me that he was at my service for the purpose of buying anything outside such as grapes or wine. I decided to take a chance and gave him a pound and asked him to get me several things and bring back the change. He was gone almost as soon as the pound left my fingers and I gloomily kicked myself for trusting him.

The Italian was quite mad the jailer told me. He had been picked up on suspicion of espionage, but everyone knew he wasn't a spy.

"If he had been a spy," said the jailer, "he would have been shot almost immediately. We do not worry about trials here. If a man is a spy then we just shoot him."

I said that meant that they had decided I wasn't a spy then? He replied that as long as they didn't shoot me then it meant that they didn't think I was, but as soon as they shot me then I would know the worst. I thanked him.

The Italian swept out my cell every day although I never figured out why he had to. I hadn't paid anything, the jailer had changed my pound and bought my things and only asked five pesetas as a fee. But it was nice to have the place cleaned up even by a lunatic. He was undoubtedly a lunatic,

for often he stopped working for a minute and turned to me and held up three fingers or rubbed the side of his nose.

The days went by slowly and nothing happened to me. I asked, protested and begged to be allowed to write letters or see someone in authority, but nothing worked. I just sat and the days passed. The jailer told me once that I would be there for at least a fortnight. They all are, he said. I didn't believe it possible.

I devised a schedule for passing the long days. In the morning I would do strenuous exercises until I was utterly exhausted and then throw myself on the plank and try to sleep. But this didn't work too well for after a few minutes of rest I was wide awake again. I'd look at my watch and see that the whole thing had taken only twenty minutes.

I discovered a device whereby time passed quickly. I made lists. All the books I had ever read, all the people I had ever known, all the houses I had ever lived in. The plays I'd seen and who was in them and where. I would pick a date out of the past and try to establish exactly where I had been and what I had done on that day.

And so four days passed.

I was asleep after coffee on Wednesday morning, dreaming about England. I was in a pub and some men were singing, no, only one man. What

was he singing? Oh, yes. "It's a long, long way to Tipperary." I stirred in my sleep and then was half awake.

What a vivid dream! I could almost hear him singing still.

". . . and my heart's right there!"

I leapt out of bed. Where was it coming from? That English voice singing an English song in this God-forsaken Spanish prison! From outside?

In a moment I was up at the high window hanging on to the bars.

"Hello!" I shouted.

The singing stopped.

"Who's that? Where are you?" somebody asked.

"Here I am in a cell up here! Where are you?"

"In the prison courtyard but don't talk so loud. Show yourself at the window."

I wedged myself closer to the bars and tried to push my face between them. I skinned my arm on the rough stone, but didn't notice it. I could see down into the courtyard.

About twenty men were standing about, evidently prisoners allowed to get a little sun and air. One of them was looking at me. I nearly yelled with excitement.

"Hello," I said, as soon as I could control my voice. "What are you doing here?"

"About the same as you, I guess," he said with a smile. "How long have you been here?"

"About five days. How about you?"

"About a month, but I am getting out tomorrow. Can I do anything for you?"

"You bet you can. See about getting me out of here!"

"Whom shall I see? Have you got a friend in Figueras?"

That rather stumped me. I didn't know anyone I could trust in Spain.

"Don't you know anyone in Figueras? Somebody who is working with you who could get help?" he went on eagerly.

"Not a soul," I said regretfully. "But you can write me a couple of letters if you will. I'll chuck you down a card. Write the address I give you on the back and send it to the man mentioned. Tell him that the authorities here have got the idea that I am a spy. Tell him to cable to them immediately."

I managed to get a card out of my case and threw it down. He picked it up and borrowed a pencil from another prisoner. I gave him the address of the bookshop in Covent Garden and Banin's name.

"Is that all? Are you quite sure that you have no one here in town?" he asked again.

"Not a single person. Well, all the best, old man, and thanks very much. I hope you do get out tomorrow."

Chapter Eight

I DROPPED back into the cell exhausted and excited. There was no noise from outside, so evidently all my shouting had gone unnoticed. Which was peculiar because I could always hear my jailer talking to people outside. But he was probably out getting a coffee.

At last it looked as though something might happen. It was certainly a stroke of luck that there should be another Englishman in the prison. That he should sing an English song right outside my window. That he should do so when the jailer was out. And that he was to be freed tomorrow! It was almost too good to be true.

Too good to be true? Perhaps it wasn't true.

On second thought I had noticed something about the man's English. It seemed vaguely wrong,

but I had put it down to some unfamiliar English accent. But was it an English accent? Or was it the accent of a foreigner who had spoken the language for years?

He had asked me three or four times if I had any friends in Figueras and had seemed disappointed that I hadn't. Probably he had been sent to find out the names of my accomplices.

Then again, "Tipperary" was rather a peculiar song for an Englishman to sing spontaneously. It was too much what I would have expected. It seemed suspicious.

It supplied a clue to the man's identity. Perhaps he was a war-time interpreter.

Upon thinking it all over I decided that I had been "had." But it was something to know that they were no better off than before. As a matter of fact it might have done me some good for in a way it confirmed that I wasn't a spy.

"Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile. . . ."

"Never mind, Englishman. *C'est la guerre!*" The jailer shrugged his shoulders and sighed sympathetically.

He had come into the cell and sat down on my bed to have a good talk. He had patted me on the shoulder and told me something in Spanish. I hadn't understood a word, but I nodded my head and

looked as though I understood. Perhaps it was some news of a village bombed; he seemed very upset.

He stood and stared at me for a minute or two dolefully. I felt uncomfortable. Was I supposed to say something now?

"You are a very brave man, Englishman!"

I heard that all right. I wondered what he meant. I didn't like this.

He shook my hand warmly and went out.

I puzzled over his strange attitude for some time. I determined to ask him what he was talking about if he came back. He did come back in about an hour.

"Can I have your overcoat?" he asked.

"Certainly not!" I said indignantly. "I want it myself. It gets quite cold in here at night."

He smiled. "Not now. I mean can I have it . . . after?"

"After what?" I said weakly.

"You know."

"But I'll need my overcoat, won't I?"

"Oh, no! You'll not need an overcoat where you are going. It will be warm enough there." He thought this was a great joke for he hooted with laughter. Then he saw my face and apologized.

"Never mind. Brave little Englishman!"

He patted me on the back and left.

The rest of the day I had the jumps. I jumped at every noise. I hadn't any idea what he was talk-

ing about and I didn't like to think. Perhaps it was just his idea of a joke.

Supper came, but for the first time I couldn't eat it. I lay on my bunk and tried to sleep but couldn't.

About ten-thirty a gentle knock at the door. I was up in a minute. I could make out someone standing outside the spy slit.

"Hello. Who is it?"

It was the Italian prisoner sweeping out the cell block. He put his mouth to the slit.

"I have learned the time, *signor*. Four o'clock in the morning. I also to go. May the good Mother help us now!"

He slipped away with his broom and left me standing in an agony of fright. I shivered and for the first time I found out that a cold sweat is something more than a cliché. I nearly lost my head. Somehow I got a grip on myself and the first hysteria passed.

It was impossible! They couldn't execute me, an Englishman, without any kind of trial.

But was I an Englishman or had I forfeited that right when I volunteered to fight for Spain? And as for a trial, would they say that those questions in the police station were trial enough?

I lay on my plank bed and stared up through the window. Was I going to be shot at four o'clock? Or was it all a cruel joke of those two? They would

come in the morning and laugh to see me white and sleepless.

I determined to disappoint them. I would go to sleep and forget all about it.

The village clock struck twelve, then one and soon two. Two more hours! Three came and I lay taut for an hour. There it was! Four measured strokes. Four o'clock and nothing had happened.

I strained my ears but the prison was quiet. A wave of relief swept over me. Now I could sleep.

The next second I was rigidly awake. The footsteps came nearer. Heavy footsteps. Soldiers' footsteps! Soldiers marching! Orders shouted. Halt! The jailer's sleepy voice. Lights springing on. My light on.

"One in number three and the Englishman in twelve."

The key was in the lock now and the rusty bolts going back.

A thousand plans raced through my mind and left me lying helpless.

A hand grasped my shoulder roughly.

"English, come on. You've got to go now. Wake up!"

I stared at him. I turned to the door. Four with rifles stood at attention. An escort party. A firing squad.

I got up and put on my shoes. I walked firmly out of the cell. I was terribly frightened, but now

my mind was working again. What to do about it?

I decided to wait until I was sure it was a firing squad and then make a break for it. Perhaps we would pass a bicycle somewhere. I was determined not to stand against a wall without some sort of resistance.

But the Italian was dragged whining from his cell and handcuffed to me. We were put between the soldiers and marched out of the jail.

The jailer looked disappointed to see I was wearing the overcoat.

We walked through the quiet streets. Up one, turn and then turn again. Soon I was lost. Where was this execution ground?

Across a park and there in front of us was the railway station. We were sat on a seat in the deserted waiting room.

A half hour passed.

"Where are we going?" I asked the officer in as normal a voice as possible.

I could feel the Italian go rigid.

The officer looked at me distastefully for a long minute.

"Barcelona," he snapped. "To headquarters for questioning."

Chapter Nine

THE early morning train to Barcelona was an hour late. The peons and their families didn't seem to worry much about that. They had come well prepared for a long wait. Besides, the two prisoners, important spies no doubt, were plenty of interest to pass the time. How they would tell their less lucky friends of the two dangerous prisoners who were being taken to Barcelona on the same train!

When the train arrived everyone looked agreeably surprised. They seemed to think that it said a lot for the government for the trains to be running at all. Schedules have never been very important and in these times they were regarded as little better than general guides.

This ability of the Spaniard to wait uncomplainingly for long unnecessary periods had amazed me

at first. By this time I was beginning to understand and expect it. To them the fact that their country was laboring under a nasty civil war was very unfortunate, but certainly no reason to rush about and get tired. After all the other side took things quietly, so why start an unwelcome precedent?

There being nothing to pay for us, we had a first class carriage. There were but six seats and seven of us, so somebody had to stand up. It couldn't be the prisoners for they might try to escape, so it had to be one of the soldiers. It was funny to see him standing up in the swaying train, trying to keep his balance and his rifle.

The handcuffs were chafing my wrists badly and the Italian persisted in jerking his arm cruelly every few minutes. I drew his attention to it once and he turned to the officer and asked him to take them off.

He said that he could see why they manacled me, for I was certainly an English spy. But why do it to him, a good comrade?

The officer told him with a grin that he was handcuffed to me to prevent me from escaping.

The soldiers hooted at this example of wit and the officer was very pleased with himself.

But in a few minutes the officer, who really was a good sort, relented and unlocked us. The Italian pressed him to put both the handcuffs on my wrist, but the officer shut him up.

This sudden unfriendly attitude of my fellow prisoner puzzled me. He seemed intent on making me out a spy, but I couldn't see what good it would do him. He seemed so stupid and wore his usual half-insane expression.

I inspected him surreptitiously to see if I could get any hint of what he was up to. He was sitting with his chin on his hands looking out of the window with no apparent interest. I half closed my eyes and leaned back as though to go to sleep. In a few minutes I caught him glancing at the dozing officer shrewdly while the soldiers were busy with some game of coins.

His black eyes rested on me for a moment and then went to the top of the open carriage window. In that moment I realized that his idiocy was assumed. Those eyes were the eyes of a man used to thinking and acting quickly.

He drew his feet slowly and noiselessly up under him and straightened slightly on his feet. Again he sized up the window. I felt that at any moment he would launch himself out. The space was just about big enough to allow him to wriggle through. It would probably be all over before the others had realized what was happening. It was a plucky effort and I determined to help him. I would get in the way of the soldiers when it happened.

He was half out of his seat when the officer stirred slightly. The Italian slumped just in time. The

officer opened his eyes and looked at him cunningly for a moment. Then he spoke with the air of a man who has been turning over what he has to say for a long time.

"You said that the Englishman is a spy. Now how do you know that if you are innocent?"

The soldiers stopped talking and turned to hear the Italian's answer. Now his opportunity was gone. He rubbed his nose foolishly. It was acting, but it was good acting. It nearly convinced me all over again.

"Oh, I know what I know!" he said mysteriously. "About that Englishman I know plenty. Things you would never find out. He is a deep one, that Englishman."

The soldiers were much impressed and looked at me respectfully. They wanted to hear more, but the officer shut them up.

"When we get to Barcelona we will see. Then you will tell all you know, for you are a good comrade."

The Italian shrugged his shoulders and didn't answer.

All the fences along the line just outside of Barcelona were covered with rudely drawn signs. "Death to Fascism!" screamed one. "Farmers, the land is yours!"

I learned several new sets of initials. Everywhere

the hammer and sickle glared at me. All the buildings were flying flags and it seemed that each had a different flag. I had never seen half of them before. They were newly invented for the revolution.

But that one wasn't!

Far off in the city, waving proudly above the rest, was the Union Jack. The last thing I expected to see. That was probably the British Consulate. How I longed to jump out of the train and run to the protection of that flag. Every minute it drew further away. I felt it slipping from me. But what of it? After all I had forfeited my country's protection when I took up arms.

It wasn't a consoling thought. For the first time I regretted coming to Spain. I thought of Medora in France. What would she think when she didn't hear from me? What would she do? I knew that she couldn't come to Spain because the frontiers had been closed to foreigners. I hoped she would go back to England.

I had asked a dozen times for permission to write to her. I had offered to let them write the note from my dictation and to word it as they pleased, but they refused.

Well, here we were in Barcelona.

A further example of Spanish war-time efficiency. I was rushed from one imposing-looking

building to another. Nobody could deal with me for I wasn't in their department.

The poor Italian was dragged along too, and I grew heartily sick of his whining voice protesting that this was no way to treat a good comrade.

After several hours of this we arrived at a building bearing up under the imposing name of Jefatura General de Orden Público.

The Italian and I were told to wait in a little room upstairs. There were no windows and a guard with a rifle blocked the door. The Italian was palpably nervous now. He walked up and down the room briskly, forgetting or not caring about his play-acting.

The door opened quietly and a sleek young man stepped into the room. He looked at me appraisingly for a minute. I noticed that his face was yellow and his eyes all bloodshot with dark hollows under them. He looked as though he worked all night every night. He soon dismissed me and turned to scrutinize the Italian.

He smiled nastily and addressed the Italian by name softly. The Italian recognized him too and realized the game was up. He sat down in a chair with his face buried in his hands. I thought I heard him sob.

The young man shouted some orders over his shoulder and a couple of guards came into the room

on the run. They were followed by the officer who had escorted us and one or two other men.

The yellow-faced one complimented our officer on having made an important capture. A spy they had wanted for a long time. The officer laughed modestly and said it was all in his work. Although he had suspected the Italian from the first.

The Italian laughed sarcastically.

Two of the guards grabbed the Italian and half carried him out of the room.

"What will you do to him?" asked our officer.

"Come outside and see!"

The whole party filed away, and as they passed the sentry at the door the young man took his rifle.

I could hear the voices of them as they went downstairs and then a door closed on them. I could still hear them talking. Then silence and quite suddenly the sharp report of a rifle. Then a second shot.

The young man came back alone and handed the rifle back to the sentry at the door. The sentry reloaded the clip. The young man closed the door behind him and walked over to me. By a great effort I didn't shrink from him. He glared into my eyes. Then he said something very quickly to me.

"*No comprendo*," I said.

"Tell your story, please." French this time.

"Don't you speak English?" I protested.

"Talk in French!" he ordered.

But I was stubborn and refused to speak in any language but English. I didn't want to take the chance of being misunderstood.

He changed his tack and became affable. He quite understood and would send for the interpreter immediately. Meanwhile I was to come to his office.

He beckoned me to a big armchair in front of his desk and I sank into the red leather gratefully. He chatted pleasantly to our officer. The two soldiers stood at casual attention in the back of the room.

I kept thinking of the cold-blooded killing of the Italian. He was sitting so calmly at his desk, this killer. I wondered how many men he had shot like that. He must like it, I thought, or else he would have the soldiers do it.

It wasn't war just to take a man out and shoot him. There had to be a trial or something to make it all right. And it wasn't as it was on the battlefield where the other man was your enemy. But of course the Italian was his enemy. But on the battlefield the other man is armed. But not always. Well, then, what was the difference? I didn't know.

In about an hour the interpreter turned up. He bowed low to the pasty-faced young man whom he called Señor Roga. It was "Sí, Señor Roga!" and "Sí, sí, Señor Roga!" He understood perfectly what

to ask me. He turned to me with a flourish and barked something in German.

I said that I did not understand, that I did not speak German.

He smiled and raised his voice slightly. No? Well, no doubt I was deaf. He shouted at me in German. No?

"*Sprechen Sie Deutsch?*" he said, suspiciously.

"No!" I shouted. "English and only English!"

He was told to go and left hurriedly.

Another long wait. I was feeling rotten and wondered if the business of the Italian had upset my stomach. But I realized that my trouble was hunger, for I had had nothing since noon the day before.

Another interpreter came into the room. A cartoon German this time. Tall, venomously thin, complete with shaved head, monocle and scar. He received his directions silently and clicked his heels at the end.

"Good afternoon," I said. "Do you speak English?"

"Certainly!" he said coldly, formally. "Make any statement that you wish and I will translate it for you. Proceed, please!"

"First, I am very hungry and cannot tell my story until I have been fed."

"Hungry?" he said in shocked tones. "Please

make your statement first and you will be fed afterwards."

"I'll be fed first and make my statement later, please."

Señor Roga interrupted. He sent for a waiter who came in record Spanish time. The interpreter took the menu and turned to me.

"What do you want to eat?" he asked in his frostiest tones.

I didn't know the Spanish names of the food on the menu and I didn't want him to try and translate every article.

"I'll have everything you've got," I said gaily.

He looked very surprised.

"No, you cannot have it all, for there is too much for one person," he said solemnly.

I felt that my attempt at humor had fallen flat. I told him to order anything he liked.

While I was eating, he retailed this conversation to the others. They all looked very serious about it.

After the meal there were no more excuses and we got down to business. I told the interpreter the whole story. He drained me dry of information.

Then they questioned me.

No, I did not know why the commandant had said that he had never heard of me.

No, I did not miss the train on purpose.

No, I did not have or at any time take any photographs.

Yes, I was often absent from the fort but quite innocently.

Then they produced my various notebooks and I was asked to explain them away.

I launched into an elaborate explanation which lost some of its weight about halfway through when it dawned on me that no one believed a word of it. I finished lamely. They looked at each other skeptically.

What was the purpose of the maps?

Well . . . to refresh my memory in the future and to . . .

What is the meaning of the statement on page twelve, "The courtyard is full of Franco's troops"?

Oh, lord, I had forgotten that! It was going to be a tough one.

"Well, you see I was writing a story . . ."

"A what?"

"A story, a short story about the war. . . ."

"Why?"

"Well . . . er . . . when I get back to England I thought that I . . . er . . . might . . . I could . . ."

"Yes, we know all about that," explained the interpreter rudely. "But this other little book with the dates and numbers in it. Is this also a story?"

"Oh, no, that is a diary," I said brightly.

"Oh? And what is the difference between a diary and a story?"

I tried to explain, but it didn't go down very well. I seemed to be getting in deeper every minute.

Señor Roga, the officer and the interpreter went off into a corner of the room and left me alone. Roga sent out for someone else and an important-looking man joined the party. He was told the whole story.

". . . and, señor," I caught, "when I asked what he would like to eat he told me everything! I say that he is mad!"

They adjourned and discussed the case with someone else. When I was left alone in the room, I crossed to the window to find it barred, of course, and leading only to a courtyard full of soldiers. I found a telephone book and memorized the address and number of the British Consulate.

About seven o'clock the interpreter and Señor Roga came back. They were very friendly. Roga said through the interpreter that he was practically satisfied that I was not a spy and if everything went well I could join my division tomorrow at Albacete.

I was wholly unprepared for this sudden *volte-face*. I asked him what hotel I was to sleep in that night. I made it clear how badly I wanted a bath and a bed before I went up to the front.

"I am sorry but it is necessary for you to remain here in this building for tonight. I cannot take the responsibility of letting you go to a hotel, for there are many people who think that you are an important spy."

I was disappointed, of course. I asked where I was to spend the night. There didn't seem to be any cells in this building."

"We'll put you in one of the offices. There's another Englishman there. Don't talk to him—he's under grave suspicion."

Chapter Ten

THE babel of chatter stopped as I stepped into the room. The men turned and stared interestedly at me for a moment.

"Hello, everybody!" I said cheerily in English for the benefit of the Englishman. Nobody replied or looked as though they had understood me.

I scanned their faces carefully, looking for one that seemed British. I didn't know quite what I was looking for. Everyone was very grubby-looking. No collars and several days' beard made it difficult to pick any nationality.

Three of them were playing dominoes at a long table. One, who had the appearance of a leader, was a short, red-faced tough with his hair cut close to his scalp. I guessed him to be a German. One of the other domino players was a typical young Spanish

type. Tall, black shiny hair, sallow complexion and built rather delicately. This one looked a trifle cleaner than the rest. His hair was combed and the collar of his shirt had been turned in to hide the dirt. The third man was about thirty with a knotty build, a rough face and an unpleasant expression. The first thing I noticed about him was that he was wearing a brand new pair of cavalry boots which contrasted with a pair of jodhpurs and a khaki shirt in the last stages of decay.

After summing me up the three turned back to their game. I was satisfied that the Englishman was not among them. I turned to look at the others more carefully and met the guard slouching across the room. He was young and pleasant-looking and greeted me in friendly fashion.

"Welcome, English. Sit down on this chair, it is comfortable and as long as you don't move too suddenly it won't fall apart." He laughed. No one had been so kind to me since I arrived. I began to like this young soldier. He went on. "I expect that you're pretty hungry, eh? Wait a minute for Anita is coming and she will take your order. You have money?"

This last was said with an elaborate carelessness. I replied that I did have a little money. He became if possible even more friendly.

After a little polite conversation he left me and I wondered if any of the others would attempt to

find out if I had money. But no one took the slightest notice of me. They seemed rather to be pointedly avoiding me. From time to time I thought I caught some of them stealing glances at me. Once the young Spaniard playing dominoes favored me with a deliberate wink. It dawned on me that they had probably been warned not to speak to me.

I now had time to look around the room a little more thoroughly. It contained a long table, a roll-top desk and several chairs. In one corner was a pile of filthy blankets and a no less filthy old man asleep on the top. He was evidently dreaming and kept making ridiculous faces in his sleep to the amusement of a couple of boys sitting with their backs to the wall. They were about seventeen, evidently Spanish, and looked the least worried of all the prisoners.

Presently the door opened and a fat greasy woman waddled in with a tray. The table was instantly cleared, the two boys jumped up with a shout and the dirty old man leapt up and hobbled over to the roll-top desk. From one cubbyhole he produced a knife, from another a serviette, from behind a book he stealthily withdrew a pat of butter wrapped in newspaper and from one of the drawers a small bottle of wine. All this time he was gurgling like a child. He sat up to the desk, tucked in his serviette like a bib, reverently revealed his dirty little bit of butter, and poured a few drops

of wine into a paper cup that looked as though it had been used for the same thing many, many times.

While everyone was eating a sort of stew, the guard explained to me that, as the inhabitants of the room were not actually prisoners but merely *detenidos* which meant that they were detained for questioning, they weren't officially admitted to exist and therefore couldn't be fed at the expense of the State. Consequently they had to buy their own food and remain waiting in the room until they were called up to be questioned.

Anita rolled across the room to me and smiled. The guard introduced us gallantly.

"What would you like to eat, Comrade?"

"What choice is there, Anita?"

"Only stew, nothing else."

I ordered the stew and Anita left promising to be back immediately. The time dragged on. The other men finished their stew and regretfully put away their shining plates; the old boy tore off a bit of crust, patted a little butter on with his finger and scraped the inside of his plate clean; he dropped the result into the paper cup, added a little wine, and polished it off with a loud satisfied smack of his lips. Then he started to carefully secrete his little treasures again, pausing between each one to make sure no one was watching. I noticed that all studiously looked away as he did this. I learned later

that he was slightly mad and would make a terrible fuss if he caught anyone looking at him burying his treasure.

Finally when I had about decided that Anita had given me up she came back followed by a pretty little witch of about fourteen whose entrance was the signal for everyone to wake again. She was a favorite with the prisoners. She had quite a reputation as a wit and everything she said was greeted with roars of laughter. She came over to me and set the tray down in front of me. Then she stepped back a few paces and surveyed me. She said something uncomplimentary and everyone laughed. I ate my stew gratefully and quietly, and after a few more remarks she gave up.

When I had finished and everything had been cleared away, it was decided that it was time to go to bed. The table was pushed back and the blankets rolled out on the floor. I perked up a bit at the sight. It seemed I might have a comfortable night for a change. The blankets looked inviting. I moved casually in that direction.

The guard slid between me and the haven and politely explained that it was forbidden for me to sleep next to the others. Would I make myself comfortable in the chair? My hopes disappeared and I settled myself into my most uncomfortable chair. The lights were put out and soon everyone was asleep.

Before the night was over I was yearning for the comfortable plank in Figueras. The lice-infested mattress I had first slept on seemed now to be luxury beyond dreams. Somehow the night passed. I consoled myself with the thought that in the morning I would be free. I repeated this over and over to myself and finally hypnotized myself to sleep.

The next day at about ten I was called into the other office. I had been waiting since six. At last I would be able to get a bed and a bath.

The interpreter asked me pleasantly if I had had a comfortable night. I told him without sparing any details. He listened complacently.

"So you think that you were uncomfortable. You may thank your God that you were so well looked after! Downstairs we have dungeons where most of the prisoners arrested as you were are kept. I hope you may never see them, but if you do you will realize what an easy time you are now having. It is so bad down there that we dare not keep anyone we want to live there for long."

I flared up at that.

"That's all very well, but what the hell right have you to keep me here at all? Have you got my papers from the commandant yet?"

"Yes, they have come this morning. They will need careful investigation. If they are all right you will be released this afternoon."

That mollified me somewhat. I supposed that I could last until the afternoon.

The tough young man behind the desk barked something at the interpreter. The German clicked his heels and turned to me.

"Now," he said fiercely, "you must answer some questions."

Just then there was a commotion in the hall outside. Excited Spanish voices. Somebody came hurriedly in the door, looked apologetically around and crossed over to the young man at the desk. He whispered quickly. The Chief snapped something at the interpreter. The interpreter practically ran across to the desk. The young man gave him careful directions. The interpreter returned to me and put on his most threatening look.

"He says that there is someone coming to inquire about you. Now listen carefully. You are to sit there quietly and you are not to look at them or hold any communication with them. The Chief says that if you try to attract their attention—well, you know what happened to your Italian friend!"

I looked around me. The noise outside became louder; I thought I could distinguish an English voice. Everyone in the room was waiting for me to say something. I looked at the latest arrival, the man who had brought the news. He was a sinister-looking, weedy, gangster type. His coat was open

and he wore a gun plainly in a shoulder holster. He was staring at me hostilely. I turned to look at the young man behind the desk and as soon as he caught my eye he drew a finger realistically across his throat just in case the interpreter hadn't made himself clear. I smiled nervously.

The Chief gave the order to let the people outside in. I was very interested to see who my would-be rescuers were. A tall beautiful girl swept furiously into the room and strode across to the desk.

"What's the big idea of keeping me waiting outside?" she inquired, shaking her finger at the young man.

He shrugged his shoulders and the interpreter explained that she would either have to speak in Spanish or through him.

The girl turned to her companion whom I noticed for the first time, standing back at a respectful distance and smiling at everyone in the room.

"Go easy, Kitty, and don't offend him. Remember that he's pretty important around here. Just say that I am the London Communist Party representative in Barcelona and that I would like to speak to the English aviator they have here. Say it politely."

Kitty strode up to the desk and looked at the young man distastefully for a long moment.

"Where is this Englishman, Elstob? Why have you taken him prisoner? I demand to see him!"

The argument proceeded for about five minutes. She demanding and he swearing first that he had never heard of me, later that perhaps I had been taken prisoner and finally by saying that I had not yet arrived in Barcelona.

All this time I was in a sweat of indecision. I was trying to gather enough courage to speak. The gangster opposite kept glaring at me threateningly. At last I caught her companion's eye. I winked very carefully. He looked a little surprised and then smiled and looked embarrassedly away. I cursed him silently.

By this time the girl had persuaded the Chief to allow her to see some of my papers. He opened a drawer and produced my pilot's license. The girl grabbed it and showed it to her companion. They looked long at the picture inside. I picked up hope. Evidently the young man had forgotten that my license carried my picture inside.

"Well," said Kitty, "I don't know him and he evidently is not in Barcelona. We'd better come back in a few days."

I couldn't see my salvation walking out like that. The gangster opened his coat suggestively. Somehow I got quakingly to my feet. The memory of the cold murder of the Italian nearly made me sit down again.

"I'm the person you're looking for," I squeaked. Nothing at all happened.

Kitty gave me a scornful look. "Why didn't you say so before?" she said witheringly.

I had no answer for that.

Nobody quite knew what to do next. The interpreter stepped forward ready to say something. But the tough stepped quickly out from behind the desk.

"You are not allowed to speak together now," he said.

"How did you get arrested?" asked the girl quickly.

The young man looked threateningly.

"I don't think I had better talk now," I said. "But will you come back this afternoon? They are going to release me then."

The interpreter broke in. "That's right. Come back at about five."

The young man took the girl by the arm and ushered her out. He closed the door after her and came back to me.

"That is not going to help you," he said slowly and distinctly in English.

"Why, you do speak English then!" I said, grabbing at an opportunity of changing the subject.

He smiled, as though he saw through my subterfuge.

"I speak it very badly, like you speak French."

I was rather hurt at this slur. I had rather prided myself that I was getting on well with my school-

boy French. I had spoken to everyone in this language previously except of course the interpreter. Now it seemed that they hadn't understood me at all.

"You will go back now to the *detenidos* room until you are called again."

I was taken back and shown my favorite chair again. The guard didn't seem surprised to see me, even though I had assured him that I would be released. I sat down and presently Anita and the girl Dolores came and we ate lunch. It was stew.

After lunch I was sitting at the roll-top desk thumbing the pages of a Spanish magazine when the short Teutonic-looking man came over and began to rummage in one of the drawers. He took no notice of me and I moved slightly out of his way. All of a sudden I felt him pinch my leg. I looked down, but he was only searching through the drawer. I wondered if it could have been an accident. My magazine was loose in my hand and he suddenly swiftly gave it a pull and it slid to the floor. He left it there and I stooped to pick it up, as I did so he spoke distinctly in English,

"Get your chair next to me tonight."

I straightened up and glanced at the guard. He was playing draughts with the mad old man. He seemed oblivious of us. I whispered,

"I'm being released this afternoon."

He took a notebook out of the drawer and went

back to his place. I tried to catch his eye for the rest of the afternoon but he, wiser than I, carefully avoided me.

The afternoon dragged on and presently it got dark. Anita came with the supper and still no sign of my release. I asked the guard if he had any message for me and he said his orders were that I was to remain for another night.

I was disappointed but made up my mind that I would surely be released in the morning. I moved my chair over to the end of the blankets and waited for all to go to bed. Finally the table was pushed back and the short fat man took the position on the end of the line of blankets which put him at the foot of my chair. The lights were put out and I waited impatiently for him to speak.

After about an hour, when I was sure that everyone was fast asleep, I leaned down and whispered—

“Are you there?”

“Be quiet!” he hissed back. “Later the guard will go out for coffee.”

I kept waiting and ages later the guard got up and crept softly out of the room. As soon as the door closed my friend sat up.

“My name is Harry Rigby. How do you do?”

I told him my name and we had quite a long talk. It turned out that he was an English teacher of Spanish, who had had a very serious illness and had come to Spain to recuperate. After about three

months of living in a tiny Catalonian village, he had heard about the war and had asked permission to go back to England. Permission had been granted and he had been supplied with a military pass. At the frontier he had been stopped and sent to Barcelona for questioning.

"They brought me in this room and asked me to wait until I was called. A week later one of them came in and asked my name. I told them and demanded to see someone in authority. They said that the Chief was busy now, but as soon as he was free I could see him. That was two weeks ago. At first I used to raise hell every day, but after a time I found out that that does no good at all. The only thing I have heard since then was the other day when one of the chiefs came in and told us that they were putting a very dangerous English spy in with us and God help the man who spoke or communicated with him in any way. After what you've seen in this place you can hardly blame me for not speaking before. Besides that, the man came over to me and told me that it particularly applied to me."

I told him that I had been told much the same thing about him and we laughed over it. Presently we heard a step outside and he got down again quickly.

"Good night, Bill!" he whispered.

"Good night, Bill," I replied.

In the morning I looked to see if he was still there. He was all right. But he took no notice of me. He was still playing safe. Nothing much happened all day. I sat still and time passed. I wasn't sent for and I kept wondering what could have happened to my rescuers.

About five in the afternoon I had just about resigned myself to another night in the room when an order came through that caused a little excitement. We were told to collect our things together as we were going to be moved to another office.

We all lined up and were marched out into the hall and ordered to wait. I could see the door of the other office.

Somebody asked the guard where we were going and he answered.

There was a chorus of groans. I turned to Rigby.

"Where are we going, Bill?"

"Down in the dungeons, Bill!"

At that I made a break for it and began running down the hall towards the other office. I was determined to see the young man who had promised me release the day before. The guards spotted me and ran after me, shouting for me to stop. I ran on pretty confident that they wouldn't shoot me in the building. I burst into the office and the dapper young man was behind the desk surrounded by his thugs. The desk was covered with jewelry, money, gold objects and various other plunder.

One of the young men was in the act of emptying a pocketful of rings and watches on the desk when I burst in. One of them sprang to the door and closed it in the guard's face. There was a nasty silence.

"What do you want?" said the boss softly.

"Is it by your orders that they are moving me downstairs to the dungeons?"

"Yes."

"Why? Didn't you tell me I was to be released?"

"I am sorry, but there is some delay in your case. You will have to be detained another two days. There is no room for you here upstairs, so you will have to go downstairs for the two days. After that you will be released."

"Do you give me your word that that is so?"

"I have said it and you have nothing more to worry about."

"Very well," I said majestically, "I will go!"

There was of course nothing else that I could do and I marched out of the room to the angry guard outside.

"I am ready now," I said. He led me off to the rest and we started downstairs.

In the first floor underground was the police station. Here we were taken and systematically searched. Our neckties, belts, suspenders, braces and shoelaces were taken away so that we would not hang ourselves, and put in neat little packets

and filed away. We then marched down two more floors to the dungeons.

As the last door was opened an overwhelming smell of tightly packed human bodies swept out. We waited in the corridor, staring at the awful specimens on the other side of the bars. Down here with no light or proper food they had become yellow skeletons. They stared out from the other side of the bars at us with leering faces. Each door was packed with them, and it seemed that no man could possibly squeeze another human being into any one of those little cells. The guard stopped before the first cell. It was about as big as the inside of a family car without the seats.

"How many in there?" he shouted.

"Nine!" somebody groaned in reply.

"Three more in there," said the guard cheerfully.

We moved on to number two. Here there were already eleven and two more were shoved in.

At number three a gaunt yellow skeleton in a dirty pair of white ducks spoke to me.

"Are you English? You are? Well, come in here with us. There are two of us in here."

"Come on, Bill," I said to Rigby.

"Not me!" said he fearfully. "I don't like the look of those fellows."

"How many?" said the guard.

"Twelve!"

"Two more in here!" he smiled.

I went forward and asked if I could go in there. The guard pushed me in with one of the others. He was one of the boys who used to spend his time laughing at the mad old man. He looked far from laughing now. His name was Amando.

The thing in white ducks shook me by the hand.

"My name is Fernando. I'm a Filipino. But here's a countryman of yours."

Turning I saw another dirty, bedraggled, bearded specimen.

"Hello," I said. "Are you English?"

"No, I'm Scotch," he said carefully. "My name is Henry Mackay. Have ye got any money?"

Chapter Eleven

FOUR days later found me well established in the dungeons. I had decided that all Spaniards were liars and that in all probability I was stuck until the end of the war.

Mack and Fernando and I formed a little group by ourselves and spent the day relating our various exploits in the past.

Mack, it turned out, was a soldier of the road. He spent most of his time in French prisons for riding on trains without tickets. Prison was no novelty to him, but this one was the worst he had ever been in. He entertained us with various stories of the good prisons he had known where every prisoner had his own private room with a bed lamp and plenty to read. He used to sigh for these places as the rest of us sighed for home.

Fernando had been working in Spain for some time and had been arrested on suspicion of being connected with a Fascist organization. He had had time however to appeal to the American Consul and was in high hopes every day of getting out.

Mack's hope of getting out lay in the fact that he had smuggled out a note, by a girl prisoner who had been released, to the British Consul. He expected every moment to see the Consul walk in and rescue him.

Among the other prisoners in our cell, which incidentally was designed as a place to hold only one, two or three prisoners for a few hours before their trial, were two Frenchmen, deserters from the army in Africa. They had already been in this one cell for six weeks and they considered that they owned the place. They took charge of the apportioning of floor room for sleeping purposes. We were glad to let them. One of them, a hairy little ape named Louis, had a wife on the outside who used to send in his lunch every day in a basket.

One of the peculiar things about these Frenchmen was that they used to spend their mornings disconsolately waiting for dinner. At this time they would be irritable and speak to no one. Then their luncheon would arrive and they would dive for the thermos flask of coffee that the wife sent every day. The husband, Louis, would take the first long swig and pass it to his friend who would be waiting

impatiently. Then he'd have his swig and almost immediately their spirits would pick up again and so during their dinner they would feel better and better until finally at the end of the meal when they had drained their flask dry they would be in the highest spirits. All afternoon they would keep us amused with ribald songs and clowning. All this on the strength of that marvelous coffee.

Of course, we finally found out their secret. His wife, who really was a treasure among wives, used to mix the coffee with an equal quantity of anise. This potent liquid got by the guards every day!

The dungeons as I have said were a series of exceedingly small stone cells underground, designed to keep prisoners who were wanted upstairs for trial. There were ten cells in all, in a line. The largest number of prisoners they had ever held before the war was thirty. When we came in there were one hundred and thirty-four.

In my cell there were fourteen. A seat ran around the inside of the cell. A man could just manage to lie down on this seat by putting his knees under his chin. This took care of three at night. Eight more by similar gymnastics could sleep on the floor. Two more wedged themselves in the doorway. The remaining man stood up in the middle of the room for forty-five minutes and then changed with someone else. Consequently each of us at one time in the night had to spend

forty-five minutes standing up quiet and motionless in the middle of a ring of sleeping men.

In the morning every man awoke with some part of him gone to sleep and the first half hour was spent by everyone attempting to massage everyone else. Then, for those who had money, would come coffee and bread. The next meal was at two o'clock and that one was free. It was usually rice or beans.

The next important thing to happen was at five o'clock when the guard would read out a list of two or three names. These were the prisoners who had been judged and assigned to other prisons. The name of the prisoner would be read and he'd shout the number of his cell in reply. Then the guard would tell him the prison he was to be sent to. This made all the difference, for if it was El Modelo it meant that you were going to be let off lightly and only kept there a little while; if on the other hand it was Leituna, it meant that you were in for a pretty bad time; and if by any bad luck it was Montjuich, it meant the worst: that you were condemned to death.

At other times during the day various names would be called and these usually meant that the prisoner had a visitor. After I had been there about a week my name was called and I thought immediately that my rescuers had found me again. But it was only to be fingerprinted and photographed.

I protested to everyone that I wouldn't be treated like a criminal, but there was little else that I could do about it. I came back very disgruntled.

"They can't do that to me, Mack," I stormed. "They can't treat me like a criminal!"

"I know just how you feel, laddie," said Mack, sympathetically. "I was the same way meself when they first mugged me—but you soon get over that feeling."

Fernando, however, was very sympathetic and agreed that they had no right to do that to me, a British subject, before I was convicted of any crime.

Just then one of the guards bellowed out Fernando's name. He jumped and shouted back that he was in number three and what was it, a visitor or a transfer or . . . ?

"*Liberstad!*" shouted the guard.

We all gathered around and congratulated him; men seldom went free direct from there. He was asked to execute a thousand and one commissions. He went out waving happily to everyone and promising everything.

This event brightened everyone up. At least it proved that it was possible to get out and that we were not as completely forgotten as some of the older prisoners made out. Besides that, it moved the American Consul up to number one position in order of power. Formerly the Dutch Consul had

been considered the most powerful Consul in Barcelona for his amazing feat of obtaining the release of two Dutch sailors. The British Consul, I was sorry to hear, was down near the bottom of the list. The relationship between His Majesty's government and Spain, I was assured by some of the prisoners, was not of the best. I began to feel discouraged.

About this time we had a new prisoner shoved in with us. He was a fat, elegantly dressed, rather pink individual smelling strongly of Eau de Cologne. He was horrified at being in the company of such a crowd of toughs.

He was pushed in about nine one morning and the guard told him that he was only to wait until he was wanted for questioning. This was the oldest joke of all. Everyone was only waiting to be questioned and some of them had been waiting for seven weeks!

But this man looked so horrified at us and so pityingly that we decided not to disillusion him. He stood by himself all day. When the guards passed he always asked if they wanted him. When the beans came at lunch he turned up his nose in disgust. Late in the afternoon he relaxed a bit and tried to find a place to sit; needless to say they had all been taken long ago.

At supper he looked a little hungry, but decided to wait until he got home and could have a good

meal. It came time to go to sleep and he shouted until the guards came. They told him that if he didn't shut up they'd put him in a far worse place. They frightened him thoroughly and he was quiet the rest of the night.

We grabbed our allotted few inches of space and went to sleep. He stood stiffly in the center of the room, still disdainful. When I awoke in the morning and looked for him, he was sleeping at the Frenchman's feet.

It was a joyful sight to see this nice clean gentleman slowly deteriorate into an animal like the rest of us. He had no money and he wasn't allowed to communicate with anyone outside. He became dirtier and less and less fastidious, until finally he was one of the first to fight his way to the bean line and he wiped his crust around his dirty plate as avidly as I did.

So the days passed. I would see Rigby every morning when the men in number three were allowed to walk up and down the corridor to stretch their legs.

Then I would go up to number nine and rap on the bars.

"Good morning, Bill. What would you like for breakfast this morning?"

Then he would settle back comfortably and gaze at the ceiling.

"I'll have some fried mushrooms and bacon, please, Bill."

Then I'd shout up the corridor at an imaginary chef and tell Bill regretfully that there weren't any fried mushrooms and bacon. Of course, it would end by Rigby asking for beans and I'd say that was all right and that they'd be along right away.

This little bit of clowning went on every morning and we always roared with laughter at ourselves. In the afternoon when the men in his cell went for their walk, he would come down and ask me if I was at home to the president or the duchess? After due deliberation I'd say that I was not at home to his distinguished visitor but if they called back later—?

This horseplay of ours came in for a lot of comment among the other prisoners and they arrived at some startling conclusions. It was agreed, for instance, that Englishmen always called each other Bill and that I was undoubtedly mad and that an Englishman always thinks there's a joke in all situations because he has no sense of humor.

The prisoners kept changing all the time. In the first cell which was unnumbered were the women prisoners. There were about ten of them and they ranged from a little dancer, who had been arrested because she had the misfortune to be in one of the officer's rooms when the revolution broke out, to an elderly lady who had been arrested when she had

a dinner party of eight people in contravention of a law which forbade the gathering of more than four people in any one place without special permission.

The little dancer sang all day long, and late at night when most of us were fast asleep she would entertain the guards by dancing up and down the corridor naked. Mack and I often resolved to stay awake and witness this, but we never were able to accomplish it.

One morning, when the whole prison was talking about a particularly lewd dance she had executed the night before, she walked past the door of our cell. (The women's cell was never locked and they were at liberty to walk up and down as much as they wished.) The Frenchman Louis spotted her and called her over. He explained that we had all been unfortunately asleep the night before and would she favor us with a little dance now? She said that she would be glad to and proceeded to strip. The guards were quite willing, and soon she was stark naked and in the middle of her dance, while the prisoners fought to get the best positions. The guards were clapping their hands to keep time and everything was going well, when quite unexpectedly the local commandant turned up at the door outside for an inspection of the prison.

The guards shouted frantically for her to get

back in her cell, but she, realizing that she could get them into trouble, refused to go and danced away. The general knocked louder and someone shouted for them to open up quick for inspection. The head guard caught the little dancer and carried her back to her cell kicking and screaming. He was just in time to meet the commandant coming in. The commandant roared out an order and the poor flustered guard dropped the dancer and stood to attention. She picked herself gracefully up and bowed low to the commandant, kissed the embarrassed guard and retired.

After a quick inspection the commandant left saying that he would see the woman who had so outraged him in his office. The little dancer went upstairs and didn't return. But somehow nobody worried about her!

A week passed in this fashion and Mack began to think that perhaps his note had never reached the British Consul. I had given up hope and was convinced that I had been forgotten. I never expected it to be my name any more when the guard blew the whistle.

One Saturday afternoon the guards began calling out a name that no one answered. We listened carefully.

"Pedro Extran! Pedro Extran!" the guards called.

I had an idea. I called the guard over to the cell door.

"Here, let me see the name," I said. "Perhaps I know it."

The guard held the piece of paper so that I could read it. On it was written, "Pedro Elstob, extran." The *extran* stood for the Spanish word *extranjero*, meaning foreigner. I told the guard excitedly that it was my name.

"What is it, guard?" I asked eagerly. "Is it liberty?"

"No," he smiled. "You have a visitor. Come on!"

I was highly elated and followed him gladly. I guessed that it must be my rescuers again. This time I wouldn't let them leave without me.

We went upstairs and I saw the light for the first time in a week. It made me blink like some nocturnal bird in the bright sunshine. But what was better was the glorious sensation of breathing fresh air again. In that week I had almost forgotten what it smelt like, the foul air of the overcrowded prison had become the natural thing to live in. This fresh air, cold and non-smelling, seemed too good to be free for the asking.

We walked along many stone halls and through different offices, everyone we met turning to stare at the filthy creature in dirty trousers and torn shirt and shoes that flapped without laces. They

stared at my hair, uncombed for over a week, at my covering of youthful beard, at the dirty pieces of rope that held my trousers up.

I waved to everyone we met and felt in the best of spirits. It was so good to see all these clean people!

Finally we arrived outside the last door at the end of the hall and here the guard stopped for a moment.

"She is in there," he said.

I was nearly sure that he had said "she" and I prepared to meet the redoubtable Kitty. I determined to make a better impression this time and I swept into the room with as courageous an expression as I could command.

The room was full of people waiting to see visitors and I couldn't see Kitty or her companion anywhere. I kept looking carefully and dimly perceived someone getting out of a chair and coming towards me. I turned and faced her.

"Hello, Peter!" she said gaily.

"My God!" I shouted. "Medora!"

Chapter Twelve

"MEDORA!" I repeated. "How did you ever get here? I thought you were in England! How did you ever find me? How did—"

"Shhh! Darling! We haven't any time for questions now. Look, this man is from the Consul. He'll help you all he can."

A young man emerged from behind her and looked at me distastefully for a minute.

"Will you come in the next room, please?"

He swept in in front of me and I followed him still in a daze but keeping a firm grip on Medora. We sat down and he fired questions at me. I told him the whole story. It took some time to tell and, as I talked, I kept looking at Medora and wondering how on earth she ever found out that I was in Barcelona or even in trouble at all.

When I finished the young man asked me some more questions and told me what he would do.

It seemed that he could obtain my immediate release, but only on condition that I leave Spain and stay out. If, he said, I was caught in Spain again after that, he wouldn't answer for the consequences.

I agreed eagerly to all that he had to say for my one idea now was to get out as quickly as possible. I wanted to talk more to Medora, but it seemed that that was forbidden. The guard came back and told me I had to come along.

"When will you get me out?" I asked. "Can you do it today?"

"No, not today, but you will be released first thing Monday morning. Today is Saturday and all the offices are closed."

I paused at the door, suddenly remembering that in my elation I had forgotten something. I wrenched away from the guard and went back to him.

"Tell me," I said quickly. "Did you get a note from a Henry Mackay?"

"Yes. I came down here and asked for him and I was told that there was no prisoner of that name being held."

"Well, there is, for he's in my cell."

"All right. Tell him he will be released with you

on Monday morning. Are there any more English—down there?”

“Yes, there is one other. He’s a teacher, name of Harry Rigby. He has a passport and a military pass entitling him to leave the country.”

“Well, tell him we’ll see what we can do for him, too.”

The guard was really quite angry now and insisted on pulling me away.

“Good-by, Medora. I’ll see you on Monday morning,” I shouted.

I was so eager to get back and tell Mack the good news that I hurried the guard along. When we got to the top of the last flight of stairs leading down into the dungeon I drew a deep breath of fresh air and saved it as long as I could.

When I got back, Mack was sitting on the floor holding his head in his hands and looking thoroughly discouraged.

“Good news, Mack!” I shouted joyously. “We’re leaving on Monday. We’re both going out. I’ve just seen the Consul.”

At first he wouldn’t believe it, but when he did he packed his things in his handkerchief and prepared to wait the forty-eight hours straight through.

We drew a chart on the wall and marked it off into forty-four divisions. Each division stood for an hour. At half past every hour by my wrist

watch we would fill in the space with pencil. Soon there were only forty-three, then forty-two. When we awoke in the morning we filled in eight hours all at once. At lunch time Sunday we looked at our chart and saw there were only twenty hours left!

Prison this time had worked a change in Mack. He no longer talked longingly of the open road. He assured me solemnly that all that was past. This time when he was released he would go back to England and get a job and stick at it. His ambition was to go back to Edinburgh and see the family he had run away from at sixteen. But he wouldn't go back without money in his pocket and that meant getting a job and sticking at it.

I agreed with him and we made extravagant plans for the future. The other men in the cell joined in and our enthusiasm spread even to the two Frenchmen who were going into their eighth week of waiting. I was so sure of being released this time that I refused to listen to the pessimistic ones. I kept my own and Mack's spirits up by repeated references to our chart.

At last Monday morning came and I was up and ready to leave at half past six. I got Mack all ready too by telling him that the Consul had said first thing Monday morning and it wouldn't do any harm to be prepared. At half past seven we crossed

another division out and there were but three more left.

Each one of the last three seemed longer than the last. Finally someone said it was half past ten and I crossed the last division out.

"So now," said Louis. "Now you are free, eh?"

This caused a loud laugh but I answered that they would be along any minute now. More laughter.

The day dragged on and by two in the afternoon we realized that something had gone wrong. I asked one of the guards and he said that no one would be released on that day because it was a holiday!

I became dejected and poor Mack was also upset. We sat and the day passed. Amanda, the boy who had been in the room upstairs, attempted to console me. He told me that his mother came every night to see him and that she would get news of Medora. I thanked him, but had very little hope. Just then something happened that made us forget our own troubles.

The guard called out Louis the Frenchman's name, and Louis answered. He had been there for forty-eight days while they considered his case. He was suspected of anti-government activity, but he was sure they couldn't make the charge stick. This would be the result.

"Here I am in number three, Guard! What is it?"

The guard came to the door.

"A transfer to prison," he said softly.

"What prison?" faltered Louis.

The guard hesitated for a minute and we strained to hear. At last it came—

"To Montjuich!"

Louis recoiled at the word. He was badly shaken and so were we; we had thought perhaps that he would be sent to one of the tough prisons but that he would be condemned to death had never entered our minds. Montjuich was too terrible to think of; we had vague rumors of wholesale massacres that took place up there. It was supposed to be the place where all the assassinations happened, and they said that you never came back. It seemed unbelievable that Louis was going to die like that.

He packed his things like a man in his sleep. He went out without saying good-by to any of us except his companion. They wept a bit on each other and then he slouched out. To me he seemed to have shrunk; he was no longer a healthy young brute but a decrepit old man.

After he had left there was an unpleasant silence. Clearly it was time Mack and I forgot our troubles. Someone said hopefully that perhaps they didn't shoot everyone that went to Montjuich, but the older prisoners scoffed.

Presently we heard Amanda's name being called and, although we knew that it was time for his mother, we were so unnerved by Louis' unexpected departure that we all jumped involuntarily.

Amanda said where he was and the guard told him he had a visitor. We all relaxed. Amanda rushed out and was back immediately, telling the guard that he had forgotten something. He came over to me and took my hand.

"Don't worry, *amigo*, I will tell my mother, and my mother—" here he sighed hopelessly—"she is, is—wonderful!"

He dashed out again and several of the men laughed at his boyish enthusiasm. I was touched.

"I wouldn't be surprised," said somebody, "if they shot him. His father is a general fighting on the other side, you know."

But that seemed silly. I was sure no one would shoot a kid like Amanda.

A little later I got permission to go to the urinal at the end of the corridor. I stopped at number nine and aroused Rigby. I told him about seeing Medora, what she had said and gave him the message from the Consul's office, but he didn't seem very impressed.

"I've been coming to Spain now for seven years," he said dolefully, "for seven years, and I know these Spaniards. They'll let us go when it's convenient to them and nothing the British Consul

says or does will make the slightest difference to them!"

I was inclined to think that Rigby's weeks of waiting had made him unduly pessimistic and I still believed that the day's delay could be easily explained.

When I got back to my cell, Amanda had returned and told me that his mother had promised to go and see if Medora was all right. It hadn't occurred to me that there could be anything wrong with her, but the others seemed to think it was quite likely that she had also been arrested. I began really to worry now and could hardly wait for the next day to see if I heard from her at visiting time.

When the morning came I was again up early and ready to leave at a moment's notice. Although I had said nothing to Mack about it at all, he was also up and evidently waiting. We both jumped whenever the guard came in and out.

Lunch came in and we relaxed miserably, fairly certain that nothing would happen that day. Mack was eager to get out and put his new manner of life into operation at once. It was his only topic of conversation now.

Sometimes he would remain quiet for an hour or so, staring ahead at the wall thoughtfully. Then he'd lean over and poke me.

"You know, from now on," he'd say deliber-

ately, "from now on it's the straight and narrow for me. All work and no play! First thing I'll do is to get a job. Any job!"

Then he'd relax and keep quiet a little longer. A little later he'd say much the same thing all over again.

I didn't want to hurt his feelings, so I always made a show of interest, but I couldn't be interested in anything for worrying about Medora. I felt that it was my fault that she was here. I practically convinced myself that she'd been arrested and a sense of my own inability to do anything about it depressed me.

About four in the afternoon one of the prisoners walking up and down outside knocked on the bars and asked if he could speak to me. I recognized him as a German who had been brought in a few days before and whom I had befriended. He had had no money and I had bought him food for a couple of days until his money came from outside. Since then I hadn't seen him.

"What do you want?" I said, in as unfriendly a tone as I could.

"Listen carefully," he whispered in English. "This morning I was upstairs being fingerprinted when a young Englishman came into the office and asked when you were going to be released. They said that you and the other young Englishman would be set free tomorrow at ten o'clock."

"Is that true?" I said breathlessly. "Are you sure that it was me he spoke of? Did you hear my name?"

The German swore there was no mistake and then the guard spotted him talking to me and warned him off.

I went back to Mack and told him the news. We were jubilant again and started all the old planning. But this time we decided to have no charts to tick off the hours. We would forget about the time and in no time at all we would hear the guards calling our names.

We decided to keep absolutely off the subject of release and plans for the future. We sang all the songs we both knew in our unmelodious voices, much to the amusement of the other prisoners. Amanda in particular was glad to see us so happy and kept requesting various modern popular songs he had heard at the pictures. He would sing a few bars and ask us to sing that one for him. I never knew the words of any of the songs he wanted, but as he didn't understand English anyway it didn't matter much.

Mack and I were in the middle of a very soulful rendition of "Men of Harlech" when the bellowing of a guard broke in on us. Amanda jumped up shouting that it was his mother no doubt, and we realized that our plan had worked, for the time had slid by and it was already night. Nobody had

caught the name the guard called, owing to our singing, and he was asked to repeat it.

"Pedro Frederick Extran!" he yelled.

I jumped up. It was either a visitor or my release a few hours early.

"Here I am!" I yelled. "*Al tres, guardia, al tres!*"

While the guard was coming to number three, I turned to Mack and told him that if I got out and he didn't I would do all that I could for him. I felt sorry for Mack who looked as though he was doomed to stay for at least the night.

The guard arrived at the door and asked gruffly which one was Pedro Extran. I stepped forward.

"What is it, guardia? A visitor or liberty?"

He shook his head slowly.

"Neither! You are to be transferred to another prison."

"No, it can't be! I'm to go out tomorrow, I tell you! Here, let me see the name."

The guard showed me the paper and sure enough there was my name written. I didn't know what to do or say. I was dazed. But someone else did.

"What prison?" asked one of the others.

"He goes to Montjuich!"

"My God!" I shouted. "You can't do that to me! I'm a British subject and I haven't done anything. You can't shoot me! You can't shoot me!"

I turned around and looked at all the other prisoners. They fell back. I realized the futility of appealing to them or to anyone. I gathered up my things, dully. Mack was standing awkwardly by. Amanda came over and touched my arm. Just as he was going to speak the guard called out his name.

"It is my mother," he said quickly. "I will tell her to go to the British Consul for you."

I clutched at this faint hope.

"Yes! Tell her to tell him to work fast. There must be some mistake."

The guard was at the door and Amanda was waiting for him to open it.

"No," said the guard. "I am sorry, *chico*, no visitor for you tonight—you are to be transferred to Montjuich also."

"But my mother!" sobbed Amanda. "What will she do without me?"

But the guard had gone.

Amanda and I silently got ready and the guard came back and let us out to wait in the corridor. Mack stood in the door and stared at us. He hadn't said a word since the blow fell, but he kept his eyes on my face in case I wanted to say anything.

I had completely forgotten Rigby until the guard called out his name. As the guard went down to number nine I said bitterly, "Another one for Montjuich?"

"Yes," said the guard.

I turned to Mack.

"Listen, Mack!" I said hurriedly. "If they are going to shoot Bill and me, you're the only one that can do anything for us. If you get out at ten tomorrow, for God's sake make that Consul do something. Tell him I'm at Montjuich, and if he doesn't know what that means, make it clear to him that they don't joke about it. Tell him to start raising hell! Immediately! If he can postpone it for a few days we have a chance! And if he doesn't come for you by ten o'clock you try your damndest to see him somehow! Will you do that for me?"

Mack grabbed my hand through the bars.

"Ye know I will, laddie!"

Rigby came up the corridor with his possessions tightly rolled up under his arm. He was white and shaken, but he managed to smile when he saw me.

"I wrote to the President and arranged for a change of hotels for us," he said with an attempt at cheeriness. "I don't like the service here."

"I understand that one gets beans to eat in Montjuich," I answered in an attempt to keep it up.

We both laughed loudly. Amanda was sobbing all this time.

"Come, come," said Bill in his schoolmaster's tone. "We can't have you carrying on this way, my boy!"

"I don't care for myself," said Amanda, "but it will kill my mother."

The guard came along before Bill had any more time to try his misguided efforts. We were pushed upstairs into the office where we had parted from our suspenders and personal belongings and these were all given back to us to be taken away from us again when we arrived at El Castillo de Montjuich. We were led out the back way and hurried past a long queue of people. Amanda searched the queue for his mother, but we were rushed along so quickly that he didn't get time for a good look.

There was a small bus waiting at the curb and we three were put in it and handcuffed together with Amanda in the middle. Amanda sat next to the window with Bill next to him and me across the seat at the other window seat, with Amanda's wrist handcuffed to mine. Two husky guards occupied the other seats.

Then Amanda suddenly saw his mother. He forced himself half out of the window, jerking Bill and me to our feet with a cruel wrench of the handcuffs.

"*Madre! Madre!*" he shouted.

The little old peasant woman turned at the sound of his voice. She ran across the square and the next moment she was sobbing hysterically in his arms.

"*Hijo mío! Hijo mío!*" she moaned. "Where are you going?"

"They are taking me to—to Montjuich!" faltered Amanda.

The old woman seemed to go mad at that. She knew what it meant and she couldn't contemplate the idea of them shooting her boy who was little more than a baby.

She clung to his neck screaming and all her weight rested on those handcuffs digging into our wrists.

The guards in the bus were trying to drag Amanda away, but couldn't get at him for Bill and I were involuntarily blocking the way.

One of the guards outside decided to try to pull the old woman away from her boy. She was screaming and crying and shouting "*Hijo mío!*", as though by these means she could keep him beside her.

The guard outside, who was a brutal type, grabbed her shoulder roughly and pulled. Her dress tore across the back. He cursed and grabbed at her again, but she kicked backwards viciously and her heel sunk into his groin. He doubled up with the agony of it and the other guards laughed loudly at him. He shook his head as though to shake away the pain and stepped back a pace. He swung the butt of his rifle hard at her head and her screaming was cut short.

She lolled unconscious in Amanda's arms and he cursed the guard wildly. The guard pried her away from him with his rifle and she slid in a heap to the pavement.

She lay there in a horrible unnatural position. Amanda stared, unable to move. The blood from her wound trickled off the pavement and into the gutter. Amanda screamed and covered his face with his arm.

The two guards held him tightly and with a jerk the bus started up the long hill leading to Montjuich.

Chapter Thirteen

I COULD tell by the noise the bus was making that we were going up a steep hill that seemed to be getting steeper, for we went slower and slower and the engine was groaning with effort. The sound of Amanda sobbing in the dark made things worse.

One of the guards was evidently disturbed by the boy's wails, which had an eerie sound in the pitch blackness, for he suddenly pushed aside the curtain and we could see out.

We were high above Barcelona in what seemed to be a park. The city below was just a few sprinkled lights in the quiet dark valley. It had a strangely unreal appearance to me, because of the effect of the sudden spaciousness after the cramped quarters I had left. A breath of the night air blew

gently into the hot bus and we prisoners gulped at it greedily.

One of the guards muttered something to Rigby and the other laughed raucously. I asked Rigby what he had said.

"He says to take a last look at Barcelona and get as much fresh air as you can, for where you're going you will need it," said Bill dryly.

Presently, when it seemed that the struggling bus was ready to stop trying to conquer this hill, a huge castle loomed up in front of us. We came to a stop and papers were leisurely exchanged. The gates swung squealingly open and we rattled into the fort.

We were bundled into an office and sent before someone for questioning. I went first and answered all the stock questions glibly except the one asking why I had been arrested. That seemed too much of an effort so late at night and they didn't seem to care anyway. Then all my personal belongings were again taken away from me and wrapped up in a little paper parcel.

As I came out of the room I saw Bill waiting to go next. He clutched my arm and asked what happened in there. I told him it was only formalities and he picked up heart and marched importantly into the room. I could hear him telling the poor warden that he had been for seven years in Spain, was a personal friend of the President's, had

special permission to leave the country and would see that a question was asked in the House when he got back to England.

He eventually came out minus accouterments but in full possession of his dignity despite the fact that he was having a difficult time holding his trousers up and carrying his clothes.

We both waited while Amanda went in. He had not of course recovered from the shock of seeing his mother attacked and he was inclined to be hysterical. He answered no questions and would do nothing but curse everyone.

"That won't do him any good," whispered Bill to me. "If he makes a fuss like that they'll take him out and lose him!"

While we waited in the hall outside for them to finish with Amanda, we were the object of great interest to a pack of men in a long room at the end of the passage. They crammed the iron door and stared at us without making a sound. They were gaunt and haggard, looking like a cageful of some new species of wild men, for their clothes were in rags and their hair long, filthy and matted. I hoped fervently that we wouldn't be put in with them. Bill whispered to me that they were probably mad.

When they had given up trying to get Amanda to talk intelligibly, he was sent out to us and we were marched out of the first building and across

a courtyard, then down a passage through another courtyard, up some stairs and so on until I had completely lost my sense of direction. I only vaguely knew that we seemed to be climbing all the time. In the end we came into a square about twice as large as any we had passed through and here we waited while the soldier in charge of the party went into another office and more papers changed hands.

This square was cobblestoned and three sides were shops and offices, a barbershop, a bar and a canteen. The fourth side was a plain stucco wall pitted and scarred as though by rifle bullets. In one corner was a flight of stone steps going down into the darkness.

Our guard came out and we were marched down these steps. At the top was a cell about as big as the one I had just left. Its door was open and a guard with a rifle sat in the way. Inside were half a dozen men sitting quietly. They didn't look up as we went past.

We went down for two flights before there was any light and then there was a faint glow from below. A little later I heard a deep murmur which grew into the hum of many men's voices.

We arrived at last at the bottom room, a huge cavern packed with hundreds of men. Someone near the door spotted us coming and a roar went

up. They herded to the one door to get a look at the new prisoners.

I was pushed into the room by a soldier and passed through the crowd at the door like a large package. When I came to rest I was surrounded by a mob firing questions at me. I made it understood that I didn't speak Spanish (although by this time I did speak a little) and they left me for Bill and Amanda.

About four youths took me aside and tried their English on me. I didn't understand anybody except one linguist who pointed to his mouth and said something in a questioning tone. I understood that all right and assured him that I was. He dashed off to return with a bit of dry bread which was most welcome.

He went on talking vigorously in what he fondly imagined was English and I kept nodding my head. I don't know how this would have ended, but I was rescued by a funny little bald man in a colorful shawl who pushed through the admiring crowd and addressed me in a horrible American accent.

"Say, bigga boy, howsa are ya, huh? Youse is a Amurrican, ain't ya? Me too, pal, you betcha, none of these dirty dagos for me! No, sir! I was in Amurrica ten year, you betcha! Got to be Amurrican citizen. Them lousy Spaniards can't keep me

here! I got my rights! I'm a hunnert percent Amurrican!"

He stopped and waited for me to say something.

"Well, I'm not an American," I said. "But I'm glad to know you anyway. What part do you come from? I used to live in America."

"You not an Amurrican? Well, pal, lissen here. . . . I ain't an Amurrican neither. But they won't plug me as long as they think I am! Pretty smart, huh? Oh, you bet Yankee is one smart guy. Say, what are you eatin' that dry bread for? You hungry? Well, come along with Yankee, I got everything in this man's jail!"

I excused myself from the one who had given me the bread and followed my new-found friend around several pillars and under countless lines of clothing until we came to his corner near the door.

His bed was on the floor like everyone else's, but he had real blankets and a pillow. He had certainly made himself comfortable; a pile of newspapers and magazines, a change of shirt and trousers, various tin dishes that weren't supplied, and a comb and mirror. He took a large cardboard box from under a blanket and delving down inside produced two sandwiches and a second-hand piece of cake. I wolfed these in no time and then came the surprise. He handed me a skin bottle and taking a drink I found that it held wine!

He introduced me as a friend of an old friend's

in Cleveland to several men hanging about his spot, who greeted me rather coolly as one more to share his benefits.

All this time he bobbed around me firing questions at me, never waiting for the answers and seldom answering mine.

"Are ya full, pal? Well, come on and I'll show you over the place. Say, I know everybody!"

He pulled me to my feet and we began to walk up the length of the room. I now had a chance to look over my new quarters as the men had quieted down somewhat. We walked around and I got a good idea of the geography.

The main room was a long rectangle, roughly about one hundred feet long by twenty-five feet wide, and divided down the center by six massive pillars. The roof was two arches on each side of the line of pillars. The left-hand wall had three narrow slits serving as windows and these looked out of a bare cliff overhanging the sea. At one end the room opened widely on to two more smaller rooms, but there was nothing like a door between. I learned later that the big room was the old dining hall and the other two the kitchens. All the rooms were of cold gray stone.

The prisoners lay in long columns, head to the wall up one side and down on either side of the pillars, as well as the other wall. The space in the middle was used for promenading during the day

and for sleeping by the less fortunate prisoners at night. Long pieces of string were strung from the pillars to further subdivide and these were also used as clotheslines.

We walked around the room several times, with Yankee keeping up a running commentary on everyone we passed.

"How many men are there here?" I asked struck by the number of new faces we ran into every time around.

"About five hundred and thirty, maybe a little more. Once we had six hundred and, boy, it was damn crowded, you betcha!"

"Then they don't shoot you right away?" I asked very much relieved.

"Why, no, sir! Say, some of those guys have been here since the war started and they'll be here when it ends. Lissen, I've been here for six weeks." He scratched his bald head thoughtfully. "But then of course some they pops the first thing, bang! Just like that, bang! bang!"

I didn't feel so good then. We walked on and then he started again.

"Lissen, you don't have to worry. Franco is coming the day after tomorrow and let us all out!"

"What?" I shouted.

"It's a fact. I got it straight from headquarters. He's going to take Barcelona the day after tomorrow!"

I decided he was harmless and let it go at that. But I determined not to believe anything else he told me. Presently we passed an old aristocratic-looking man sitting on a box with his head in his hands, the picture of woe. Yankee stopped and patted him on the back.

"What is the matter with him?" I said when we had started again.

"Oh," said Yankee carelessly, "he's going to be shot tomorrow and he's upset about it."

"Is that so?" I said, heavily sarcastic. "And I suppose they just leave him down here until they want him and then send for him?"

"Yeah, that's right," answered Yankee, seemingly unaware of my sarcasm. "Him and the others, there's six others gonna get it with him. I'll point them out to you."

And the next time around he kept picking out men and telling me quietly that they were to be executed in the morning. I just thought that he was a little touched.

Later in our promenading, as he was telling me how he had gone to America and made a fortune and come back to his mother country to spend it, we passed the youth who had first given me bread. I greeted him warmly and stopped for a moment and spoke, but he seemed very ill at ease, while Yankee shut up entirely. After a minute we started on again.

"You shouldn't talk to that guy," complained my friend. "He's a Marxist bastard!"

"A what?"

"Lissen, pal," he explained patiently. "There's a helluva lot of different political parties here, see? You gotta be one of the other, see? Now there's all them communist bastards on that side of the room and there's the Fascists on the other side. Then among the communists there are plenty of different kinds and they don't agree with one another neither. Now our side ain't all Fascists, but there all guys hate the reds like hell, see? We got the Royalists and the Capitalists (that's me) and the aristocrats. We want to keep things like they used to be when a guy had money he could live on it and didn't have to work, but them red bastards want to take it all away from us! They can't do that! Now lissen, pal, which side are you on, huh? The hundred percent red-blooded guys like us or them dirty Rooshian bastards?"

"Politically I don't care which one of you win," I answered. "Because I don't know anything about the politics of the case at all. But I came out here to fight with the government against the ones that want to overthrow the government."

He stepped back.

"Well, I'm damned. Who would ever have thought that you were a red! A nice guy like you too! Well! Well!"

"Now wait a minute. I didn't say that. I said it didn't bother me what a man is down here; to me he's just another prisoner like myself. You say I've got to be one or the other. Well, just watch me! You know my position and I won't change it."

"Lissen, kid," he whispered. "Don't do anything you'll be sorry for, see? If you join up with them red bastards, you'll wake up with your throat cut one night."

I laughed at him and before he could enlarge upon it there was an interruption.

The guard stepped into the room and blew the whistle. Instantly there was silence. The guard mumbled something and read a list of names quickly. Still the silence continued although it was obvious that the guard wasn't going to say more.

There was a movement in the back of the crowd and a man came slowly forward to the door and waited silently. Then another and another. I recognized the fifth man: he was the one whom my friend had patted on the shoulder.

"What is it, Yankee?" I whispered.

"Them guys going upstairs to the condemned cell. They'll be shot tomorrow!" he whispered.

For a moment I thought that there must be some other explanation, but then I saw some of the men left behind standing in the corner where Yankee had said the Fascists lived. Several of them were

sobbing and one or two frankly crying. It gave me a nasty shock.

The guard ordered them to come along and they went out of the door. Still the crowd stayed quiet. When the last had gone the crowd noise began again.

"My God, is that the last time we'll ever see them?" I asked rather foolishly. "You mean they'll all be shot tomorrow?"

"Yeah, that's right, the only ones that will see them again are their pals. Each condemned man can send down for one pal to take last messages to his folks. That will be at two o'clock. Then those guys stay with them until the end; they see them shot."

I thought I'd better get by myself and think this over, so I left Yankee. He told me to think it over, pal, what he had said!

I went to look for Bill or Amanda. Bill was the center of an admiring group to whom he was explaining the magical effects of a letter from him to the President of Spain. I didn't disturb him.

I went in search of Amanda and found him tucked away by himself in a dark corner. He had resisted all attempts by the others to make friends and he was lying on his back staring fixedly at the arch above him. I found a spare bit of stone floor next to him and lay down.

"Good night, Amanda!" I whispered.

He clutched my hand.

"Good night, *amigo*. I am sorry my mother couldn't tell me about your lady, but they didn't let her . . ."

I closed my eyes and because I was so tired soon dropped off in a troubled sleep.

I suppose it must have been about two when I awoke, because the last-minute visitors were going upstairs. But that wasn't what awakened me. A heavy foot on my leg aroused me and I sat up. Two soldiers were standing over me with rifles. I thought they were going to drag me out and shoot me. I was sick with fear. But it was Amanda they wanted. They dragged him to his feet and he didn't protest. I saw him listlessly walking out of the door in front of them. I expect he was still thinking of his mother. I never saw him again.

Chapter Fourteen

I AWOKE at about six-thirty and looked immediately over to where Amanda had been to make sure that I hadn't dreamt about those soldiers in the night. But he wasn't there. I got up and walked around. Everyone was very quiet. Then I realized everybody was listening for something. I went over to the door, where there was a crowd of men straining their ears. I joined them and listened too.

Quite a long time later, when I had almost forgotten about it and was busy thinking of something else, I heard it: the far-off rattle of gunfire. Everyone relaxed and the noise began again. I realized that it was the executions upstairs in the courtyard. Not a very encouraging beginning, I thought.

Just about now a queue began to form and I thought it was a shame not to take advantage of

being up early enough to get among the first in any queue so I joined in. After a long wait I got to the front. It seemed that you were allowed to go in ones and twos outside. My turn came and I went outside to see what it was all about. Perhaps, I thought, it was some sort of breakfast.

But I was disappointed, for it was merely the cleanly few who wanted to wash themselves. Outside were a half a dozen dirty sinks and a minimum of water trickling slowly from a dejected tap.

When I got back I decided to go and find Bill and see if he had anything to eat. I found him quite comfortable, but with no food. He had been joined by two former friends who had been in the first room with us. One was the handsome young Spaniard whose cleanliness had first impressed me and the other was the hard-faced individual of the new cavalry boots. Bill welcomed me effusively.

"Make yourself at home, Bill," he beamed. "I'm just teaching Alfonso here," indicating the young Spaniard, "how to speak English. The other one is Jean, a Swiss wanted in most countries for something; his latest is desertion of the Foreign Legion. He killed an officer because he wanted his boots. Then he shipped to Barcelona, because he thought it was a nice place to escape attention. He said that he didn't know that there was a war here! Don't mind what you say in front of him, because he doesn't speak a word of English."

Jean beamed at me as though he was very pleased with what Bill had been saying.

"I speak English!" he confided. "*Écoutez!* Good morn-ing Mees-ter Rob-in-son!" This pleased him immensely and he repeated it and smacked his leg with great glee.

"I work one time for Meester Robinson," he explained.

Then Alfonso interrupted and I said hello to him. He seized my hand and shook it warmly.

"Howdoyoudo, I'mpleasedtoknowyou!" He turned to Bill for approval.

"No, Alfonso, that is much too fast, try it again, slowly and distinctly."

He grabbed my hand and shook it and repeated his piece at a different tempo. We all laughed.

While the English lesson went on I talked a little with Jean. He was like a big schoolboy, boastful and loud and immensely proud of his new boots which he stuck out in front of him all the time. He told me that he and Alfonso had been there for some days and got to know the place. He advised me to plead sick, complain of a headache or dizziness, and I would be eligible for a plate of watery soup every day in addition to the beans.

When Bill had finished the lesson he asked me where I was sleeping. When he heard that I had no place he invited me to come and share their bit of floor. There was one mattress that was occupied

by an invalid. He was very ill, and when he died, Bill explained, we'd have the mattress. For that reason the three of them slept all around the mattress, so as to establish their claim.

After the English lesson was over, Bill and Jean started to play dominoes with improvised cardboard pieces and Alfonso tried his English on me. I in turn inflicted my Spanish on him, and with the aid of the French we both knew, which was not much, we were able to carry on a protracted conversation.

He explained to me some of the routine of the place by telling me of a typical day in prison.

We were privileged to sleep in the morning as long as we cared to except certain mornings when we were awakened by the blowing of whistles and the frenzied yelling of "*A forma! A forma!*" This was an order to get up and stand in line two deep on each side of the pillars. Then the prisoners in the front line numbered off in loud tones while the prisoners in the back stood directly behind so that the front and back lines contained exactly the same number of prisoners. This device theoretically told the guards exactly how many of us there were, but only theoretically for it seemed that after everyone had counted off several times, the guards then counted the heads themselves to make sure. With five hundred men tightly packed in one room it usually took some time to get this counting right.

But, Alfonso made it clear, this was not the only time during the day that we were made to form up. It usually happened at least three times in a day and sometimes it seemed to be going on all day. So now I would know what to do if I heard the guard yelling "*A forma!*"

That took us up to the present time, when those who wanted to were privileged to go out and attempt to wash. The water always just trickled and some days stopped all together. This was because water was particularly scarce now and could not be wasted on prisoners. The next most important thing to happen was the arrival of letters at approximately eleven o'clock. This was only very approximate as some days the letters didn't arrive until the afternoon and many days they never came at all. At about one the older prisoners started to queue up for lunch because the first served got theirs hot and a full plate. It was so arranged that the last ten or twenty in the line invariably went without. This was to insure everything going quickly and made for a minimum of waste, for if anyone didn't want to finish his portion there were always hungry men only too willing to do so. It was quite fair, explained Alfonso, for the ones who had gone without one day were always the first in line the next, that is, except a few stupid ones who became ill and went on a different diet anyway.

After lunch came the big event of the day, the receiving of parcels by the lucky ones whose people were permitted to send them things. These had all sorts of delicacies sent in to them and occasionally sold them at terrible profits at public auction.

Nothing else important happened during a day, although various incidents usually brightened things up. For instance, the whole prison this morning was talking about an unexpected ration of cocoa that had turned up three mornings ago at ten o'clock. Everyone was speculating on the possibilities of it happening again and some prisoners were recalling similar incidents in the dim past, while others were hinting darkly that they had heard certain things spoken of by the guards which certainly meant that there was to be another surprise this morning.

Then of course all day long, every day, the guards were continually blowing their whistle and calling out a name. This might mean that the prisoner was wanted for questioning or it might be a letter or a parcel or even money and three or four times a day out of the hundred or two names that were called it meant complete and unexpected liberty. On these occasions everyone became very excited and herded about the lucky man, imploring him to take a hundred messages. Alfonso said that no one knew why these sudden releases were ordered. They were like thunderbolts and could hit

anywhere. The guilty as well as the innocent could suddenly and inexplicably be released, while his companion arrested in the same circumstances stayed behind and was probably shot on the next execution day. But the chance of this freedom was the only hope that any of us had.

When Alfonso reached this point he stopped talking and seemed to be carried away by the thought of liberty or the other coming to him.

"Tell me, Alfonso," I asked. "When does one know that one is condemned to death and when one is to die? Is there anyone here now will be shot tomorrow?"

"No, there is no one here now who knows when he will be shot or even that he will be shot for sure. Today is Wednesday, that is execution day. The next Execution Day is Saturday, the ones who are to die will not know about it until Friday morning, which is Name Day. On Friday morning the guards will blow their whistles three times and everyone listens for the result of the Tribunal. There are usually a dozen results published, some get thirty years' imprisonment, which is what they are all hoping for, but the rest are condemned to die. The ones that are condemned wait here all that day; at night about nine o'clock they are taken upstairs to the condemned cell. That was what you saw last night. Then at two in the morning each one to die is allowed to send for a friend to come

up and stay with him in his last hours. The cell, they say, faces the wall and the ones who go up to see them are made to watch them die."

It sounded very barbarous to me, but Alfonso maintained there was no intentional cruelty in it. He said that it was all due to the chaos that everything was in, so that there could be no better system than this until the government had cleared away the debris of the revolution and could spare time to organize the prisons.

Just then Bill came running up waving a tin plate and spoon.

"They're issuing them to the new prisoners. Go and get yours quickly. I don't think there's enough to go around."

Alfonso showed me where I was to go and I got a not-too-clean plate and spoon. I took them back to Bill who compared them critically with his.

"Well, they are not so good, but never mind. Don't worry, we'll soon be out of here, laddie. I've got influential friends!" He closed one eye and looked very mysterious.

"Look here, Bill, what's all this you've been spreading around about the President of Spain? Do you know him or is it all just a dream?"

"A dream!" exploded Bill indignantly. "Well, I should say not! I should think that after being in a country for nearly ten years I ought to know someone. Perhaps you don't realize that."

"All right, Bill, but do you know the President?"

"Well, perhaps I don't know him personally, but I have an even stronger hold over him than if I did."

"Come on, Bill," I begged. "Out with it! What hold have you got and is it going to do you or me any good?"

Bill looked all around to make sure no one was listening, despite the fact that not a half a dozen prisoners spoke English. He dropped his voice to a whisper.

"I've just found out . . . that the President is . . . is a . . . Mason!" he finished triumphantly. He looked at me and, seeing that I was still in the dark, he continued in his impressive whisper, "And I, I am a member of five different Masonic lodges!"

"Well, go on, Bill, what does that mean?"

He laughed indulgently. "You, not being a Mason, wouldn't of course know. You couldn't realize the tremendous significance of that fact. But, briefly, it means that the President when he receives my letter will be bound by sacred oaths to release me. Besides he will automatically know that I couldn't be a spy and he will be sure I am not a Fascist because the Masons are definitely anti-Fascist! Why, they are not even allowed in Germany! As soon as the President knows that fact, I say"—here tapping my chest with his finger—"he'll say, 'Just release old Rigby, will you?' And

who knows, perhaps he'll even say—" now he nudged me playfully—"perhaps he'll say, 'Release old Rigby's friend too!' "

"Thanks, Bill," I laughed. "I'll take my chance with His Majesty's Consul."

The arrival of the lunch put an end to this and we hurried to get into the queue.

There were two queues stretching right around the room and we got on the end of one. Slowly we moved up. Alfonso was in front of me and when we got near the big pot I saw it was beans again.

"Is it really always beans?" I asked Alfonso.

"Oh, no, only this week. Next week we have rice."

The beans were cold when we reached them, but not unwelcome. I polished my plate as clean as everyone else. The invalid was visited by a doctor who tried to get him to drink some poisonously green soup. But he wouldn't and the doctor shook his head at the guard.

"Poor fellow," whispered Bill to me. "He won't last long. Still that mattress looks very comfortable."

In the afternoon Alfonso and I promenaded up and down the long room. This was the hour of siesta, he told me, and the Rambla would be deserted. The space between the sleeping men was called the Rambla, and every night, true to cus-

tom, all the prisoners walked gravely up and down. After a few turns we decided to join the others and get some sleep.

I awoke to the sound of the guards calling out names. There had been no letters so far that day and I assumed that that was what it was. I joined the crowd around the guards and waited for my name. I didn't know what I was to be called, of course, and there seemed to be scores of Pedros. I jumped every time the name was called, only, of course, to find it was someone else. About forty received letters and the rest of us tried not to look jealous.

I was very worried not to hear from Medora. I wondered what had happened to Mack. I wondered whether Medora had been arrested which I knew only too well was quite possible. I tried to get over my gloom but didn't succeed very well. Bill spotted me hanging about the door hopefully waiting for the guard to return with something for me, and, ever good-hearted, he came to cheer me up with some of his wit.

"Laddie," he said heavily, "it's going to do you no good to hang about the door with a long face. You must have a system for these things and I've evolved one that will do you good as it does me. Now this place is really not so bad; why, you can even buy wine tonight. The only thing wrong with it is that you can't get out! Now how to solve

that? It's easy! Every time I find myself thinking about getting out, or about people outside, I stop and give myself a good hard kick with the back of my heel, like this!" Here he gave himself a terrific boot. "And believe it or not, it works wonders! If you never think about getting out, it's quite bearable in here."

I laughed loudly at the recollection of my bewilderment at seeing Bill kick himself once or twice in the past.

"You may laugh, laddie," he frowned. "But it's a damn fine system. It saved me from getting married once!"

"How's that, Bill?" I asked, grinning at his earnestness.

"Well, it was this way. I was staying in rooms at Brighton, and the landlady was a good-looking widow. Every night before I turned in I used to take a walk along the front and she took to coming with me. Well, I got sentimental about it and felt myself slipping. So every time I thought of marrying her, I'd kick myself hard!" He sighed. "Ah, and it saved me too. Though I never will forget the last moonlight night I was there. I left the next morning but it was many a day before I could sit down comfortably."

Alfonso and Jean strolled up now, and Bill was so pleased with the result of his story that he told it first in Spanish to Alfonso and then in French

to Jean. Alfonso thought it was very amusing, but Jean didn't like it at all. Jean it seemed wanted a drink badly and he was in an ugly mood.

The four of us were discussing how much wine it would be best to buy at a time, when Yankee strolled up and joined us. I introduced him to the others, Bill receiving him very coldly. He soon felt this and inviting me to visit him he left.

"Who is the blighter?" asked Bill.

"Oh, he's a rich Spanish builder who gets a lot of food sent in which he doles out to his friends," I said carelessly. "He gave me a drink of wine last night."

"What does he say?" growled Jean.

Bill translated for him and they both got up. They were going for a little walk, explained Bill.

Alfonso and I, left alone, played noughts-and-crosses for a time. Then the man with the wine came and we hurried over to get some. On the way we passed Bill stretched on Yankee's bed, putting away a large piece of cake and Jean squirting wine into his mouth from the skin bottle as though he would never stop. Yankee was so impressed by Bill's frequent allusions to the President that he didn't notice his wine disappearing.

The wine seller was a little wizened old hunchback, with two young sons, also hunchbacks. The wine was in two huge skins made, I guess, from cows' stomachs. One of the boys would squeeze

the big bladder and squirt the wine into the skin bottles everyone had. The price was five pesetas a bottleful which was supposed to be exorbitant. I got into the line and bought a skin bottle and filled it with wine, making a deep hole in my resources. Alfonso and I had some wine and decided to get some sleep. He had one blanket which he shared with me. The resulting bed was quite luxurious after the bare stone floor of the night before.

The next morning after washing, Alfonso asked me if I would like to meet one of the young Fascists who will probably be condemned to death. I was curious to know what the other side was like and so we went to meet Alfonso's friend Pedro.

Pedro lived down in the far corner of the room with a group of young Fascists. On the way Alfonso explained to me that they had all been in prison since the beginning of the revolution when they were picked up in the street fighting. There were over a hundred of these youngsters at first and they were kept intact for a long time. Only recently had the tribunal come around to their cases and now several of them were judged every Name Day. About seven or so were shot twice a week, and there were only about sixty left of the original hundred.

Pedro was about twenty-one and one of the oldest of the Fascist prisoners. He explained that he was not actually a Fascist but a Royalist, and for

that reason he was a little apart from the other boys who occupied the entire end.

When we got there, Alfonso called him and a very tall young man came loping over to us. The first impression I got was that Pedro looked almost exactly like all the pictures I have ever seen of Christ. He was gaunt with suffering and had a curly brown beard such as Christ is usually pictured with, besides which he had an indefinable air of saintliness about his gentle brown eyes and slight stoop. His voice was exactly what one expected, deep and seeming to come from right down inside. I was awed by this man, the first I had ever known with death hanging over him. I felt ill at ease in his presence, but he soon put things right.

He spoke a little better English than Alfonso and after making me comfortable and giving me some sort of sticky almond paste, he talked to me of the war and why it would be a good thing to have a king once more in Spain and a church. Perhaps these things will have to be accomplished by the Fascists, he said. If so, then we will have the Fascists as long as they are useful. His arguing was good, but he gave me the impression that his reasons were essentially selfish, although he probably did not realize that. He practically said that what Spain wanted was a government for the greater good of his class. But I am no politician and I did not argue but merely listened. I resolved to take the oppor-

tunity of hearing all sides in this prison. To do that I had to speak Spanish better, which would give me something to do. At lunch time we left Pedro and he asked us politely to return and see him again.

After lunch, which was again beans, everyone prepared for his siesta. I did not feel like sleeping and spent the time walking about and peering into odd corners. I noticed a native in a loose white robe bounding a large ball of silver paper on the floor. I stopped and watched him for a minute and he soon noticed me. He gave me the ball to hold; it was about six inches in diameter and very heavy. He said that he saved all the paper he could find and that he had been making this one for the five months that he had been in jail. I asked him why, and he said it was for luck, the larger the silver ball became the more luck he would have. As I was about to leave him he suddenly screwed up his face into an ugly mask and drew his finger slowly across his throat, at the same time making a suggestive noise. Then he assumed his natural expression.

"For you and me," he explained, and went back to rolling his ball.

As I was thinking about this I was again halted this time by someone talking to me. It was a filthy, ragged man with a shriveled leg who stood in front of me. His good leg was abnormally muscular as

were his arms and chest. He stood off-center to keep his balance. He was grinning ingratiatingly at me.

"English? English?" he said.

I said that I was and he nodded as though he was satisfied. Then striking an attitude he suddenly said:

"When ween-tair comes can spreeng be far behind? . . . Sheelly!"

I was so astonished at the unexpected quotation that he burst out laughing at my face. I asked him where he had learned it, but he didn't speak a word of English. To all my questions he kept smiling and bowing, but he made it clear that he didn't speak English. I left him, but some days later I saw him when I was with Bill, and I had Bill ask him some questions. He explained that years ago when he was a boy, his father had been in the service of an English professor who had taught the little boy to say this phrase to amuse guests.

Continuing my walk and thinking about these two strange prisoners, I came down to the space in front of the door and a voice hailed me in faultless English. I turned to see an intelligent-looking youth lying on a mattress, evidently talking to two other prisoners.

"Come over here and sit down, won't you?" said the young man.

I went over and he introduced himself as Kurt and his two companions as Manuel and Willy.

Manuel was young, fat and very black and greasy; there was a smell of sickly perfume about him that didn't disguise his unwashedness. His hair was plastered down and brilliantly black, his face was soft and pudgy and he looked freshly shaven. He wore a pink silk shirt and the fat of his stomach made rolls in the silk. The other was a man about forty, with a dirty scrubby beard, matted dusty hair and a shirt with a layer of soup, beans and perspiration on the outside. This was Willy. When introduced, he rubbed his hand on his trousers, shook mine, giggled and remained smiling vacuously at me.

"You know," said Kurt, after these formalities were over, "there is another Englishman here besides you and the bald man."

"No!" I said much surprised. "Where is he?"

Kurt indicated the greasy one reclining on the mattress.

"He is an Englishman, for he was born in Gibraltar and his father was a sailor. His mother was Spanish but his father was in the English Navy. He writes to the English Consul every day, but they do not answer his letters."

I turned to take another look at him. He smiled fraternally at me.

"Are you a new prisoner?" I asked, thinking of his dandified appearance.

He stared uncomprehendingly at me for a moment and turned to Kurt.

"It is a funny thing that although he is English he does not speak English because he didn't see his father much. He wants to know why you think he is a new prisoner; he has been here for a month." This last was after he had translated my question to Manuel.

"Well," I explained, "because he is shaven and I didn't think it was possible to be shaven here."

"Oh, he pays for that; he has plenty of money and he sends for the barber every day. They charge him twenty-five pesetas [about two dollars and a half at that time], but he doesn't mind."

"Why does he shave?" I asked.

Kurt translated this question to Manuel who looked at me reproachfully.

"He says that he is surprised that you, an Englishman, should ask him why he shaves. He does it to keep up appearances before the natives. He says, have you never heard of the Englishman on the native island who dressed for dinner every night?"

I was truly squelched.

Kurt explained that he was a German who had been studying in Barcelona when the war broke out. He had been studying Spanish, and he could speak it as well as German; he also spoke six other languages as well. Willy the German, as the other prisoners called the stupid-looking one, was another German who had been on a walking tour in France, and one day he had walked across the

frontier and they hadn't let him walk back! I stayed with this trio until the letters came and then I hurried away to see if there was one for me, but again my name was not called.

I spotted Bill and Jean who had also got up to get letters and I asked if they had any luck. Neither had. I took them to meet Kurt and the others, and I introduced Bill to his fellow countryman. Bill was unimpressed until he discovered that Manuel had money and then he agreed that he was undoubtedly an Englishman and an Englishman always shared anything he had with other Englishmen. Manuel agreed uncomfortably that this was right.

Just at this time we had a little excitement to liven things up. There was among the prisoners a young French Jew who had been fighting with the International Column. He was a rabid anarchist and his rabidness took the form of suspecting that everyone else was a Fascist in disguise. He was in prison for attacking his superior officer; he had explained to the authorities that he suspected the officer was a Fascist. Since it was not the first time he had got into trouble because of his peculiar obsession, they took the lenient view that he was mad and decided to deport him. He was waiting in Montjuich to be deported, and he was the only man there who knew that he was not to be shot.

He had, of course, been the object of much bait-

ing by the prisoners with anti-communist tendencies and the poor fellow was in a continual maniacal rage. He, however, went out of his way to insult the young Fascists at every possible opportunity. The other government sympathizers respected the Rebels as brave men, who were to be executed for their convictions anyway, and were contented merely to ignore them.

This night the Jew Agitator (as he was called) woke up from his siesta feeling irritable and immediately started causing trouble by drawing a large and elaborate hammer and sickle inscription on the wall near the door where the guards could see anyone who attempted to interfere. When this was finished he scrawled a sentence underneath to the effect that all enemies of the sign must die and in this prison the following Fascist cowards were that morning executed. Then he roughly printed underneath a list of the ones who had just been shot. He stepped back and viewed his work.

We watched all this intently, wondering what would happen next. There was an angry murmur from the Fascist group, but they seemed agreed that it was only done to incite them to do something which would get them into trouble and they refused to act. A silence fell over the place as more and more prisoners left off their talking to watch what would happen.

The Jew Agitator, pretending that he was un-

aware of all this, kept polishing up his work; then as though he were bored with it, he walked away and looked around the room. No one did anything. He came back and stood in front of it. Then he spat dispassionately at the names. The spittle ran down the wall. He spat again and ground his foot on the names.

The Fascists were up on their feet now and moving toward the Jew. One of them was a boy I had noticed many times. He was young and slight with but one eye and he was the leader and favorite of the band. One-eye walked over to the inscription and spat on the hammer and sickle; the Agitator started to bellow and shout, and One-eye kept smiling at him. Now the Reds were aroused and soon there was an ugly crowd milling about the two. Our bed was right in front of all this and the ring included us. I expected to see a mob fight break out every minute. One-eye was about half the size of the Agitator, but everyone realized that he had walked into the situation knowingly. I wondered why they hadn't let one of the bigger Fascists take his part. They continued, after the fashion of Europeans, to threaten each other terribly for some time, until finally One-eye lost his temper and struck the other. The Jew staggered back and then came on with a roar. The crowd fell back to give them room. We were on our feet eager to see a good fight. Bill was shouting for someone to referee

and Jean was looking about for anyone who might like to make a doubles. The two men circled each other for a minute and then the Agitator waded in. One-eye, however, surprised us for despite his weak appearance he could hit. He was successfully pushing the other back when quite suddenly it ended for him. The Agitator, surprised at the unexpected resistance, decided to take the easiest way out. He waited for his chance and suddenly his foot came up and caught poor One-eye in the groin. One-eye sank to the floor, doubled up and groaning, and the Agitator stepped forward to get in another kick. The Fascists all moved a little forward in a body, but it seemed they lacked a leader. I was enraged at the kick and started to try to prevent the Jew from delivering a second, but somebody brushed by me sending me flying back in passing and stepped up to the Agitator. It was Jean!

His first blow lifted the other off his feet and deposited him in a heap about six feet away. That was all there was to it. The Fascists helped the still groaning One-eye back and the government supporters picked up the Agitator.

We sat down on the bed again and Jean came back blowing on his knuckles which were red and swollen. He grinned at me and I forgave him his push. He looked happier than I had ever seen him.

Kurt congratulated him and Willy the German gapingly felt his biceps.

Yankee spotted us and came running up.

"Say, boy, that was one swell socko! You bet! Lissen! That guy . . . he's gonna die! Someone kill him one of these nights . . . you see!"

Chapter Fifteen

By this time I was getting used to sleeping on a stone floor and I usually managed to get so comfortable by morning that I didn't want to get up.

The morning after the fight, at about six o'clock, there was a shrill blowing of whistles in my ears. I turned over, determined to sleep through it all. But then the guards started to bellow something that sounded vaguely familiar. I sat up and heard the cry:

"A forma! A forma!"

I remembered what Alfonso had told me: this was the lining-up and counting-out process. I struggled to my feet and stood sleepily in the front line. By now all the prisoners except the sick were lined up. Another order was given and the men in the front line started to count off very rapidly. I

could only count to ten in Spanish and I stood somewhere in the eighties. The numbering rushed along the line and came to a dead halt with me. There was an awkward silence and then it dawned on everybody around me that I didn't know what to say. A half a dozen voices told me at once and, of course, I couldn't understand any of them. The guard walked up to where I was and the case was explained to him. He was very kind. He explained that I was to say very clearly, when my turn came, "*Ochenta nueve*." He made me say it a few times until I got the pronunciation correct. Then he ordered the counting to begin at the far end all over again. Again it raced toward me and I kept murmuring "*ochenta nueve*" under my breath.

"*Ochenta seis!*"

"*Ochenta siete!*"

"*Ochenta ocho!*"

"*Ochenta nueve!*"

"*Noventa!*" bellowed the man on my left.

"*Ochenta nueve!*" I shouted triumphantly.

There was an awkward silence. It seemed that the guard had been wrong. I was not eighty-nine but ninety-one, and I had thrown the count out again. The guard and two others walked majestically up and stood staring at me. The order was given to do it all over again. I felt that I was fast becoming unpopular.

This time when it came to me, the guard shouted

out my number and solved the difficulty. It never occurred to them to have me change positions with the man in back of me who didn't have to call out any numbers at all.

This business went on for half an hour. After the standing prisoners were counted, the guards counted the sick. Two guards counted them and each time they got a different answer. But eventually they were satisfied that there were approximately the same number of prisoners and that none had escaped in the night.

After this was over I still noticed a sense of strain on everybody. It was not until I ran into Pedro down in the dark that I knew. Pedro told me that today was Friday and of course a Name Day. The young Fascists were waiting for the result of yesterday's Tribunal. Pedro was sure it would include his name to be shot, for he had dreamed he was being shot. I sat down and talked with him and soon we were joined by Alfonso.

Alfonso and Pedro had much to talk about and I was free to look about. I glanced over to where the youngsters were. They all seemed to be playing games and not talking at all of the coming execution. I particularly noticed the one-eyed chap who had been kicked by the Agitator the night before. He was better now and engaged in talking earnestly to the rest. They hung on his words, as I had noticed they always did. That is, all except

one nice-looking chap who was lying carelessly back listening with a half smile to One-eye's vehemence.

I was taken with this man's appearance; he seemed much fresher than any of the others. He saw me looking at him and smiled. I grinned in reply and he came over.

"You are the new English prisoner, yes?" He spoke English well.

"Yes, I came in a couple of days ago. Have you been here long?"

"Five months, but I think I go out pretty soon now."

He didn't say what he meant and I didn't ask. I pointed to One-eye and remarked that he seemed very excited. He laughed at this and asked me if I would like to meet him.

We wandered over to the Fascists and they took great interest in me. They asked all sorts of questions about what the newspapers had said about the war where I came from. I told them that when I had left England the newspapers were all of the opinion that Franco would take Madrid in a week and that the war would be over in two. But, I said, that was the English newspapers and no one believed them. Everyone who was at all well informed knew that Madrid would not be taken for at least a year and that the end of the war was

by no means in sight. They laughed at this and we had quite a heated argument.

But it was a fact that the English press was all wrong about the early part of the war in Spain. Too much of their reporting was done from the safety of France. The English newspapers' prediction in November that Madrid would fall in a week was the stock joke of Europe. Even in Italy and Germany where they had every reason to try to convince the public of the success of the Rebels, they weren't as confident of victory as the supposedly unbiased British press. One-eye took every word I said and twisted it into a favorable report for the Rebels. He could speak a little English and he peppered me with questions. His rôle was to prepare the ones who were to die, by convincing them that they were dying for a great cause. But his difficulty lay in the fact that none of them knew which were to die and all were thinking of that to the exclusion of everything else.

The three sharp blasts of the whistle put an end to all noise as suddenly as though some huge blanket had been dropped over the crowd. The boys stopped in whatever position they had been in, and everyone's eyes were fixed on the piece of white paper in the guard's hand as though to read the names through the back.

The guard cleared his throat and read slowly what I took to be a purely routine statement of the

judicial proceedings. Everyone knew this, of course, and it was just putting off the agony. I have always thought that the guard enjoyed the moments of power that the reading of that paper gave him, for he rolled the words out as though regretful to see them go.

He reached the names; there could be no more delay, but he paused. I felt the strain of anticipation, and for the first time it occurred to me that perhaps my name would be on the list. But the names were all strange ones to me, although I could see immediately who they were. The boy next to me who had been talking eagerly a minute before slumped at the sound of one name, and so it was with all of them.

There were that time, I think, seven to die and three sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment. These were the lucky ones, for it meant that they would almost certainly be released at the end of the war.

When the list was finished and the hum in the room had started again, I moved away for I felt like an intruder in that place. The nice-looking boy who had first befriended me saw me going and came after me.

"Are they going to . . . to you?" I asked him.

"No, not to me. I am not going to be shot at all. My father is seeing about getting me out. My friends are all to die though. It is very sad. One-

eye, he is the leader, he says for you to come and visit us again; he likes you and I like you. My name is Fernando Pasqual. What is yours?"

I told him and promised to visit them again. They were very interesting and I wanted to hear their side of the war.

I went and found Bill and asked him to teach me Spanish. He said he would give me an hour twice a day and we had the first lesson right then. Among other things I learned to count.

Just before lunch the letters came. I felt particularly sure that mine would be among them today. There was a big pile and there must be one for me.

I was standing in the line listening to the calling out of the names of the lucky ones when someone tugged at my sleeve. I turned to see Willy the German standing there. He whispered because it wasn't healthy to make a noise when the letters were being called; there were so many men who expected one and so few who got one that every name had to be clearly understood by all.

"What is your full name?" he whispered hoarsely.

I told him and he told me there was a letter for one of that name—the guard had dropped it and before he picked it up again Willy had seen the name. I thanked him warmly and became more excited than ever.

The list dragged on and ended and still my letter didn't turn up. The guard got off the chair and prepared to go, taking with him three or four letters that had not been claimed. I ran after him and made him show me them. But by no stretch of the imagination could they be for me. Disappointed, I turned back to the room. Willy the German met me and explained that he had been mistaken, the letter was for someone else. I was so angry I didn't trust myself to reply.

After lunch I was sitting with Kurt and Manuel, talking of the coming executions, when Bill rushed by us and ran up to a guard.

"Get a doctor, quick! There is a man dying over there!"

The guard said that he would get a doctor and he left. Bill said the invalid on the mattress was dying. He had been unconscious for some hours. I went over and looked at him; he was staring at the ceiling and I couldn't see him breathe. He never moved, but just kept looking at one spot until the doctor came.

The doctor took his pulse and immediately dropped his wrist and opened his shirt. He was wasted away to a shocking degree. The doctor pulled the blanket up over his face. He had been dead for some time, he said.

A little later a couple of soldiers came in and

carried the shrunken body out. Bill was on the mattress before the dead man was out of the door.

"At last," he chortled. "At last I'll be able to sleep at night. My sciatica has been killing me."

I sat on the mattress and Bill gloated, telling Jean and me that he would have no objection to our using it during the day. But his possession did not last long. In about an hour the doctor came back with the two soldiers who were carrying someone else on a stretcher. The doctor ordered Bill off the mattress, and the new prisoner was deposited on it.

All we could see of him was a shock of blond hair. Bill was very disgruntled and went off by himself muttering promises to write to someone about it.

As soon as the doctor and the others had left the newcomer sat up brightly in bed and asked for a cigarette. In contrast to its former occupant he was a magnificent specimen. He had the classic body of an athlete, smoothly muscled and golden brown from many hours of lying in the sun. He announced that his name was Oskar Alsinas, that he was an Argentine, that he was unjustly imprisoned and that he was very ill. All of us admired a healthy man who could be carried into prison, placed carefully on a choice mattress and no doubt be put on a special diet!

I went and told Bill of this and it didn't improve

his temper. He said that if he were a few years younger he'd throw the interloper bodily off our mattress and he looked meaningly at me. I didn't take the hint.

Nighttime came bringing with it the wine man, and Bill and I filled all our containers with the precious fluid. We retired to a corner and soaked our bread in it. Jean turned up in a very few minutes trailing a new friend. They both kindly helped us get rid of the wine.

Jean's new friend was an awful-looking tough whose face looked as though it had been carefully chewed and discarded as indigestible. He had been in the Foreign Legion, Jean had found out, and they spent the time talking to each other in Arabic.

The new one's name was Faestano and he told us he was king of the prison. He said he was so tough and all the guards were so frightened of him that when they saw him coming they turned their backs so as not to offend him. He said he was tattooed all over and he made his living exhibiting his tattooing.

Saying this, he stripped off his shirt exposing his tastefully decorated chest. But there was nothing new in this and seeing that Bill and I weren't impressed he decided to show us his star turn.

He lay on his back on the floor and showed his abdomen. Tattooed on his stomach was a picture

of a man and a woman participating (to put it politely) in the sex act. But this wasn't all. By carefully contracting and expanding the muscles of his stomach he caused the couple to go through the most amazing maneuvers!

We finally got rid of this entertaining fellow, but not before he had affectionately promised us that whenever we had wine he would return and give us another show.

The guards came in and called the condemned men upstairs to the death cell. It seemed in this place that, whenever we had forgotten the misery of it all for a few moments, something was bound to happen to force us to remember it.

Again the room was overcast with gloom as the young Fascists paused at the door and sent back their sad farewells. Again everyone was quiet, again the ones left behind wept, and One-eye stood out and cheered the condemned and encouraged them and insulted the guards and tried to make them walk steadily without breaking down or running to hide in the corners of the room.

Even the Jew Agitator was quieted by this and satisfied himself with standing near the door with a gloating smile on his face. I saw more than one of the Fascists look at him threateningly. Jean caught the Agitator's sneer and whispered something to Faestano, at the same time bringing his clenched fist gently against his palm. Faestano

shook his head negatively and showed something in his hand to Jean. I saw it too: it was a bit of wood about six inches long set with three safety razor blades. Perhaps Yankee would be right in one of his prophecies.

After the last of the condemned had disappeared upstairs and the young Fascists were walking back to their corner, Fernando, my friend of the morning, passed and stopped to talk to me.

"Won't you come back and talk to us?" he asked. "We never talk of . . . them . . . now."

I felt that he genuinely wanted to talk to me and so I went with him. Pedro was there with the youngsters and also Alfonso wearing his naval uniform.

"So you were in the navy, Alfonso."

"Yes, Peter. I was in the navy, but they thought I had Fascist sympathies and so they put me in here. Can you imagine anything so ridiculous?"

One-eye said something drily and they all laughed. I realized that Alfonso was a Fascist, but if they really didn't know it I thought it was rather inviting trouble to make it apparent. Pedro was an admitted Fascist agitator, and Alfonso by being so much with him hurt his own case.

We talked until quite late and I got to know Fernando better. He was a Royalist who had been picked up in the streets on the day of the revolution.

"What were you doing?" I asked.

He made a pistol with his hand and pointed it vaguely round the room.

"Pop! pop! pop!" he explained, smiling.

"Well, what makes you so sure they won't shoot you, then?"

"My father, he is an important government official. They don't want to shoot his son. Besides he is fixing it so that I get out of here. He comes to see me every Sunday. You'll see him tomorrow!"

I told him that I expected to get out soon too, and he said I must come and stay with him. We got along very well.

He said that he had been chosen to be one of the visitors to go upstairs and say good-by to one of the men who was to be shot. He didn't want to go.

I went back to my place and got to sleep, but at two I awoke again to see the visitors filing upstairs. I recognized Fernando among them. It seemed like some horrible nightmare when one awoke suddenly in that place.

The next morning was a repetition of the last execution day. The same waiting about and listening, and at about seven o'clock the rattle of rifle fire; then the return of the white-faced visitors who had been waiting up all night. Fernando came back, showing the strain on his boyish face. They were surrounded by the others eager to hear the

last words of their friends told time and time again. Then they let Fernando sleep and I left him alone.

Letters came again and again. I waited hopefully, but there was none for me. I heard Oskar Alsina's name called and looked about for Bill and Jean. I decided to take the letter to the "invalid." He had four fat ones.

When I got back to the mattress with his letters, the first thing I noticed was Bill and Jean fast asleep in a most uncomfortable position, both snoring loudly and blissfully, and Alfonso rolling up his blanket evidently in a temper.

"What's the matter, Alfonso?" I asked innocently.

"That English swine found out where I kept my wine, and he and that other have drained it dry!" he said viciously.

I laughed heartily and he turned on me.

"You are as bad as he is! All you English are the same. You take advantage of all you can get. . . ."

"You better move along, and stay away until you cool off, Alfonso."

He flung his blanket over his shoulder and marched away. Bill turned over in his sleep with a little snort. He was smiling peacefully like a child.

I gave Oskar his letters and he thanked me. He quickly glanced through them and flung them carelessly on the bed.

"Nothing important; all women . . . silly women! Oh, how they love me!" he sighed in sympathy for the poor women.

He seemed most indignant that the prison authorities had opened them. He said that they should have been able to tell by the smell that they were love letters. They should have more delicacy than to read a man's love letters.

Later in the afternoon Kurt came up to me.

"Hello, Pedro. Listen, I have an idea, or rather my friend Manuel has it. He suggests that you send a telegram of protest to the British Consul because he has done nothing to get you out. He says to say that the three undersigned Englishmen protest that they have not been given protection by the Consul and have it signed by you and the one you call Bill and Manuel!"

I told him that I didn't have any money and that it was impossible to get the message out anyway.

"Manuel will pay for everything. Money can do anything even in prison! Don't you worry. We have found a guard who will take it to the post office. To tell you the truth, Manuel feels that it would carry more weight at the Consul's if it had yours and the other Englishman's name on it," he finished naively.

We tried to wake up Bill and tell him of the plan, but he refused to wake. He did once sit up

and say, "Attendant, the steam is too hot. Are those scrambled eggs ready yet?" and then roll over again. I agreed to do it and I signed his name and my own to the telegram, Manuel added his and it was sent off. At least we got a post office receipt for it, but I never heard if it was actually received.

The next day was Sunday and some of the prisoners held a private Mass in the morning. The guards heard about it and we had to listen to a lecture by someone in authority about what would happen if anything like that happened again. It was made clear that the priests would suffer first.

There were about seven priests among us: old men they were and the only ones who were made to do any work. Their job was the dirtiest one in prison.

It came about like this. The sanitary arrangements were most elementary, just four buckets outside the door. These became rapidly filled with five hundred men using them during the day. It was the duty of the priests to see that none of these buckets was ever too full. They worked by shift, each one taking his turn to empty the buckets. This was a Spanish joke.

The oldest priest was eighty-four and he was also the oldest prisoner. He was in prison for allowing illegal meetings to take place in his church and he enjoyed the distinction of being the prisoner most afraid of dying. His entire time was spent in

talking of it. He told everyone that he didn't want to die, and he asked everyone's opinion on whether he would be shot or not.

"They won't shoot me, will they?" he'd ask childishly. "Not an old man like me! Why, I'm eighty-four; they won't shoot an old man of eighty-four, will they? I've only got a few years to live; it would be a shame to take them away from me now!"

This fear of his made him the butt of all the guards' cruel jokes. The guards would tell him to make his confession for he was to be shot at dawn, and every Name Day they would assure him that his name was among the rest. This had been going on for five months so it was no wonder his mind had begun to totter.

This Sunday morning, as though to make up for the lecture we had been inflicted with, we had a treat. Two men from the kitchen appeared at the door at eleven o'clock with a large tubful of pieces of pork fat.

How we fought to get in line! I came out of it with a nice piece about three inches long and not a drop of lean meat in it. They gave us bread too and I spent a long time over mine. I tasted every atom of each drop I put in my mouth. After the interminable beans it was the food of the gods to me.

I found Fernando happily munching his piece.

"Today my father and mother come and bring me plenty to eat. But still I don't lose such an opportunity as this, eh?"

We were joined by Bill who had sobered up quickly when he heard someone shouting that there was extra food to be had. He dashed into the *mêlée* and came out with a particularly large piece and he was well pleased with himself.

"You know, Bill, that was a dirty trick of yours, drinking poor Alfonso's wine. Now he's sore and gone off in a huff swearing against all Englishmen."

Bill roared with laughter.

"Well, if that's not funny! You know Jean and I thought that that wine was yours and we decided to teach you a lesson for hiding it on your friends. Well, I'll explain to Alfonso."

He went off in search of the angry Alfonso.

After lunch Fernando's people came as he had said they would. He was with them for about an hour, and when he came back he was carrying a large basket. After a time he came and found me and brought me back to his bed place. It was heaped high with tinned foods and I was invited to help myself. I assumed this was only politeness and regretfully refused, but he pressed some on me and I took it gleefully back to Bill and Jean.

At night an invitation to play poker with One-eye and the rest came. I went and played all night. Fernando, Pedro, Alfonso and One-eye were the

players. I won about a hundred pesetas and finally went to bed well pleased with myself for having discovered a source of income.

As I didn't go to bed until the morning, I slept through most of Monday, missing the letters and what was almost as important, the change in diet. But when I awoke in the afternoon Bill told me that there had been nothing for me in the post and he had saved me some cold rice as a consolation.

In the afternoon there was great excitement at the arrival of a strange ship in the harbor. From our windows it was possible to see into the harbor below. For some days there had been two French gunboats laying there and from time to time a Spanish battleship would also steam in. But the new arrival was British. When I heard this I hurried over and joined the crowd lined up waiting to get their turn at the window.

When I at last got to a position from where I could see, the destroyer had dropped anchor. It was British all right and flying a big Union Jack. It was a good sight to see. I could just make out the figures of men running about on her decks. They looked so near and yet were as far away from us as England itself.

Manuel was very excited too.

"As long as that ship is in the harbor," he announced solemnly, "we are safe! When it steams

away then . . . pouf! They will shoot us English!"

While I was still looking longingly at the ship, I heard my name called by the guard. I made my way out of the crowd and ran to the door.

"What is it, Guard? My release?"

He smiled. "No, not your release yet but something nearly as good—a letter for you."

He handed me a postcard and I eagerly turned it over. It was in Spanish, yet in Medora's handwriting. I knew she didn't speak Spanish, but probably they had not allowed her to write in English and she had had a friend compose it for her.

I went to find Bill, but he seemed to be nowhere about. In the end I ran across Fernando and pushed it into his hand. He read it slowly to himself.

"This was posted to you the first day you arrived here and it has been waiting upstairs ever since. Shocking!"

"Never mind that, what does it say?"

"I will read it to you. 'My dearest Peter, I fear there is to be some delay. They refuse to explain. They will not let me write in English. The Consul is working for you all the time. Mack was released this morning (Tuesday) and is going home tomorrow. Love and *mucho paciencia*.' "

"Love and what?" I asked.

"*Mucho paciencia* . . . that is to say in English . . . Much patience!"

Chapter Sixteen

THE postcard, although not holding out much hope, was at least a sign that Medora was all right, that the Consul knew where I was, and taken in that light, it cheered me up immensely. I found Bill and told him the good news, predicting that we would be out in a few days. He didn't agree that it would be as quick as that, but he thought we could be held no longer than another week. I scoffed at the idea of another week. I was sure it would only be a matter of days.

While I was talking with Bill, Alfonso came up and, ignoring Bill completely, spoke to me.

"I am glad to hear you have heard from your *chiquita*, Pedro. I hope that you at least are set free very soon now!" This was said with a flash of teeth to me and a dirty look at Bill. Bill laughed.

"You're still angry about that wine, are you, Alfonso?" He grinned.

"You are an English pig!" snarled Alfonso, then suddenly remembering me. "Excuse me, Pedro, he is just a pig!"

Alfonso steamed off. Bill made some uncomplimentary remarks about Spaniards in general.

That night we played poker again and I again won heavily. Alfonso also played and was still friendly, although he lost quite a lot. Pedro was his banker and every time Alfonso was cleaned out he had to negotiate a loan. In the end they both went off to bed completely broke. I determined to see them in the morning and lend them some money.

The next day was a Tuesday and another Name Day. I kept away from the Fascists' corner, for I felt that they didn't want anybody else about. The letters came first and Bill got one with three hundred francs in it from a landlady of his to whom he had written an appealing letter. But nobody could tell him what the exchange was and he didn't dare to change it with any of the prisoners for fear of getting cheated.

We went to see Kurt, for he seemed to be the most intelligent of our friends, but he didn't know what the rate was. He said that at one time recently it had been possible to get forty-eight pesetas for one hundred francs instead of the usual

twenty-seven. He thought the sum was probably going up.

Here Manuel interrupted. He said it would be easy to get at least sixty. Bill jumped at that.

"Would you give sixty, Manuel?" he asked innocently.

"Certainly."

"All right," said Bill triumphantly. "Change this three hundred francs for me at that rate."

He didn't really think Manuel would, but he pulled out a roll of pesetas and pocketed the three hundred francs.

Bill was jubilant. He said he was sure that Manuel had given him the wrong rate of exchange. He said he doubted if it were possible to get sixty. That was the penalty of being rich though, for Manuel obviously had more money than sense.

Just then a guard came in, but before he had blown his whistle Manuel called him over.

Our bed was near the door and he came over.

"Well," he said gruffly to Manuel, who was no favorite with the guards because of his incessant insisting upon his "rights" as a British citizen.

"Would you like to buy some francs?" said Manuel carelessly.

Bill nudged me.

The guard's face lit up. "How many have you?"

"Three hundred."

"How much for a hundred?"

"Seventy-five," said Manuel. Bill chortled.

"All right," said the guard. "Here is a hundred-and-fifty pesetas for two hundred francs and I will give you the other seventy-five tomorrow!"

The deal was done and Bill fumed. He demanded that Manuel give him all, half, a quarter, a part of the excess profits consecutively. Manuel just smiled at him.

The guard blew his whistle. It was the list of the newly condemned. Once again we had forgotten.

He went through the same rigmarole as before. I listened for a familiar name without really believing that I would hear it. They didn't shoot people you knew, I was thinking, when the name of Pedro came quite unexpectedly. I jumped and Bill looked at me inquiringly. I leaned over and whispered to him.

"That's the friend of Alfonso's, you know, the fellow I said looked like Christ. Poor Alfonso will be upset."

"Do you mean the one sitting next to Alfonso?" Bill whispered back.

I looked over and saw Pedro sitting next to Alfonso and looking as though the proceedings hardly interested him. Alfonso looked the more perturbed of the two.

"Yes, that's the one," I told Bill. "Doesn't he look . . ."

"Shhhh!" said someone behind me indignantly.

The guard had not finished yet. There was one more name and probably the man behind me was nervous. I listened for the last name.

". . . and Alfonso Manrique . . . condemned to death," droned the voice of the guard.

When the significance of that name penetrated my consciousness the reality of the executions made itself felt for the first time. Until that moment the executions had been horrible events detached from me personally; it was like witnessing a well-acted tragedy at which one feels with the actors but only with the detached sympathy of an onlooker. But suddenly that attitude was changed. Alfonso whom I knew as a friend was going to have his life come to a sudden stop in twenty-one hours.

We walked towards Alfonso in the quiet that always followed the naming of the next to die. Somebody was sobbing loudly and hysterically.

Alfonso was lying on his back covering his face with his hands. Neither of us knew what to say to him. I just stood and looked at him helplessly. Bill cleared his throat impressively once or twice, but didn't say anything. We decided to come back to Alfonso in a minute and turned to the others.

The one who was making all the noise was here. Pedro was trying to comfort him. I suddenly remembered that Pedro also was one of them.

"He's only sixteen, this boy," explained Pedro apologetically. "Too young to die!"

We murmured something about how it was understandable that the boy should be upset. We were still tongue-tied. What did one say to a man that was condemned to death?

"We are very sorry to hear about you and Alfonso. Very sorry to hear about it," said Bill. I nodded my head in agreement.

"Oh, for myself it does not matter. I have known for some time that I was to die, but it is sad for Alfonso. He was not sure they would sentence him. For me it is blessed relief though; now there will be no more waiting!"

We stayed there for a time. Pedro and One-eye were the only busy ones, moving about among the condemned like nurses among the wounded and assuaging their wounds with words instead of drugs. Bill found an opportunity to speak to Alfonso and assured him he was sorry for having drunk his wine. Alfonso was amused and so Bill unconsciously did some good. By the time lunch came, he was talking quite calmly about it.

After lunch Alfonso said he wanted to sleep and I got up to go.

"You don't want to sleep, my lad!" said Bill jovially. "You've only got a few hours, don't want to spend them in sleep, you know!"

I dragged him away still protesting. When I got

him back to our section he turned to me triumphantly.

"Well, I bucked him up, didn't I, laddie?"

Fernando came and joined us in the afternoon and he and I went on our daily walk. We talked of the latest executions and he told me that he had had cheering news from his father who had said that it was now certain that Fernando would not be shot and by next week he would be able to say definitely what day he would be released.

I told him that I was very glad to hear it and I was, for Fernando had grown on me in the few days we had known each other. We had the same interests and got on exceedingly well together. A friend was a necessity in that place and he just filled the bill. He seemed to regard me in the same light too, for he was in my company more and more and getting out of touch with his former fanatical crowd. I thought this was a good thing if he didn't want to prejudice his case. I think, though, that what drew us together more than anything else was the knowledge that we were both to be released. We had arranged to go to some country and set up in business together. It was a means of passing the hours away and, whenever we walked together, we discussed countries, capital and businesses until we could hardly wait to begin.

Night seemed to come quickly that day and I

thought how much more quickly it must have come to the condemned. How those last hours must fly.

About eight we were all playing poker and had apparently forgotten what was coming. One-eye had a heated argument with Alfonso about whether the latter had put in the correct amount of money in one hand. Alfonso swore that he had, but when the pot was recounted it turned out that he was short. He made up the deficit with a laugh and the game went on.

When the argument started I was quite angry with One-eye for I thought it was cruel of him to argue with Alfonso, especially about money. But later I realized the wisdom of it when Alfonso picked up his spirits to carry on the argument. At its end he was feeling much better. If the thought that it didn't matter how much he won or lost now crossed his mind, he didn't mention it.

At half-past eight the guard came in with the order. I for one was relieved. The suspense of keeping up appearances had been very great. I think the condemned were also glad. They wanted to get away by themselves from all this sympathy and curiosity.

They had a few minutes to get ready and as, of course, they were always ready, this time was taken up by farewells. The Spaniards were weeping on each other's shoulders and I wondered what was

expected of me. Alfonso was still sitting next to me, taking no part in the general farewells. Suddenly he spoke to me.

"Are you Catholic?" he asked slowly.

I wondered if it would make him happy if I lied, but decided against it. I told him I wasn't a Catholic.

"Why, Peter?"

It seemed a difficult question to answer in the few minutes we had, but I tried it. I told him that I was of no definite religion because I never thought much about it. I said I never went to church. I had been baptized in the Church of England, but that was about the limit of my religious affiliation, I finished lamely. He seemed puzzled.

"Then you mean you are not a Catholic, because you have never thought about it?" he asked pleadingly.

I knew what the answer to that should be, but I gave him the answer he wanted. I agreed that that was probably it. He beamed and clutched my hand.

"Then to me you are a Catholic! . . . Good-by, I go now. . . . Good-by . . . Catholic!"

He and the others went down the long room and out of the door. Pedro shook my hand gravely and said good-by as though he was going on a train journey. One-eye shouted and waved, yelling that

he would see them all again. They disappeared up the steps.

We went back to the poker game and attempted to play on, but soon gave that up. Instead they talked, not of death but politics, the reason for it all. I could follow most of what was said now.

"That boat in the harbor, the English one, is it one of the biggest?" somebody asked me.

I hadn't the slightest idea, but I told them we had many much bigger than that. They seemed amused at my boasting and asked me if I thought our navy was the best in the world. I told them that I knew it was. This amused them a lot and they went on to ask me what I thought of various other things to do with the Empire. Did I for instance think that the might of the British Empire was tottering? Did I think that Italy was a serious menace?

My answers to all these questions amused them greatly. My touching faith in our future seemed to them to mean that I was unaware of something that everyone else knew. I caught them looking at each other meaningly several times. This aroused my curiosity and I finally demanded to know what they meant. But One-eye who all this time had said nothing here interposed and shut them up.

He turned to me. "Good night!" he said politely. It was the only English that he knew and he used it on all occasions. When he first saw me

in the morning it was a greeting, at other times it became my name, or something funny; now it was practically an order to leave them. But I intended to wait up until the visitors were sent for in case Alfonso had chosen me. Besides the polite gibes had made me stubborn.

So I told him that I was not leaving them, that I was waiting for a few hours. He shrugged his shoulders and I stayed.

They forgot me and talked of other things. I lay back and thought of Alfonso. I wondered if he would send for me. I hoped he wouldn't.

After about an hour somebody began to gently sing a song that sounded vaguely familiar to me. I realized that I had heard snatches of it from some of them late at night before. Somebody else took it up and soon they were all singing it but still very quietly. I nudged Fernando next to me who had fallen asleep. I asked him what it was called. It had a martial ring to it and they sang it so fervently I knew it must mean a lot to them.

"That is the hymn," whispered Fernando. "The hymn of the National Fascists. It is called '*Cara al Sol!*' that is in English 'Face the Sun' . . . but wait and listen."

When they had apparently reached the end of the song, he nudged me. Suddenly up came all their hands in the Fascist salute.

"*España Libre!*" said one fiercely.

"España Unida!" someone else took him up.

"España Grande!"

"Arriba España!" they all chanted together.

"What does all that mean?" I asked Fernando, but he shut me up.

At about two the guards came in with the list of visitors. My name was not among them, for which I was devoutly grateful. One-eye led the seven upstairs as he did always. I went back to where Fernando was sleeping determined to have him tell me more of the meaning of the song they sang, but he was asleep.

I turned in and tried to get some sleep. Just as I was dropping off I looked at my watch; it was three o'clock and the boys upstairs had four hours to live.

I slept right through until nine o'clock and when I awoke One-eye and the others had come back and were asleep. Fernando was reading a book, Bill and Jean were playing cards with Kurt and Manuel, the Jew Agitator was loudly singing the Internationale, and Alfonso and Pedro were being shoveled into a cart in the square upstairs.

I went out to wash, and after waiting in the line for an hour, I got out and stood in front of a tap that released a drop of water once a minute. When I had washed myself somewhat, I went into the lavatories but the buckets were all in use. I wandered down to the far end of this room where an

old disused door was hanging on its hinges. I pushed it and it moved so that I could see inside. There was a small room filled with dirt and rotting building material, but what made my heart jump was the roof. The weather had worn a hole in it large enough to allow a man's body to pass!

I carefully closed the rotting door and went back to the window that overlooked that section of the wall. By peering out of the extreme end I could see that the roof at that place was only about ten feet from a ledge of ground between the outside of the fort and the cliff down to the sea. I didn't know if it was possible to climb down the cliff, but at least it was worth a try. I determined to get out to the room that very night.

The rest of the day passed very slowly indeed. At lunch I was too excited to eat, but I realized that if I was to make the attempt I would need all my already weakened strength and so I forced down a colossal helping of rice. Fernando and I walked after supper, but I was so full of my discovery that I hardly heard what he said until he mentioned our release together. Then I felt that perhaps I should take him into my confidence. He might even want to go with me.

I told him of the hole in the roof I had discovered and offered to show it to him. We got permission to go to the toilets and I showed him the room

with the rotting door and the gash in the roof with the sky showing so invitingly above.

"I envy you! I wish I could go too, but it is so silly for me to go . . . for I am to be released in a few days. Don't you think it is rather foolish for you to go too? You know you will be released, don't you?"

I told him that here was a way to get out of this hole now and not wait until they made up their minds at headquarters to let me go. I said that I was going to take advantage of it. If I could get down the cliff, I was sure that I could swim to the British cruiser lying in the harbor.

When he saw that I was determined to go he helped me plan how to do it. He agreed that it would be best to do it when the guards were feeling sleepy. It would be impossible to get out to go to the lavatory late at night because the buckets were always put in the long room at night and the one door kept locked until the morning. We would wait that evening until there was a count and then after the count I would go out to the lavatory and secrete myself in the room until early in the morning, preferably a few hours before daybreak. Many people were always going in and out and the chances were that the guards would not notice that I had not come back.

There was a *forma* about six and I was then counted. Shortly after this I went out to the lava-

tory and, watching my opportunity, I slid into the room and hid in the corner behind some old planks leaning against the wall. About eight just as it was dark and I could see the stars begin to twinkle through the hole above my head a strong light was turned on somewhere outside and shone into the hole. It seemed to be a searchlight from some point outside trained especially on that hole. Did they suspect something?

I lay as still as I could and nothing happened. In about a half hour I heard a banging going on inside and the guards going to the locked door. What now?

"What do you want in there?" shouted a guard.

"Let me out please, I am very sick . . . oooh!" This in One-eye's voice. The guard grumbled but opened the door and One-eye evidently staggered out supported by two others and followed by quite a few. The guard started to argue with One-eye, and One-eye apparently very ill rushed into the lavatory still followed by the other two. The guard went back to the door and forced the other prisoners to go back. As soon as they were alone, One-eye and the others, one of whom was Fernando, came into my hiding room and called me. I jumped up and asked them what they wanted and Fernando pulled me out.

"Come quick, Peter. It is a trap, that hole! I will explain later. . . ."

The guard came back at this moment and One-eye went on vomiting. He really was vomiting, too, and I wondered how he did it. I pretended to be one of the original helpers. The guard was a little confused at seeing four when he had expected only three and he said that two of us would have to go back. Fernando and I went back into the long room and to their corner, and in a little while One-eye, looking very pale and shaky, came back also. The prison soon quieted down.

Then Fernando explained that he had told One-eye of my plan because he was worried, and One-eye immediately thought of a way to stop me because it turned out that the hole in the roof was well known to exist and all day and night there was a machine-gun trained on the spot from a watch tower outside; and at night they turned a searchlight on it. Months ago when One-eye had been a new prisoner someone had tried my bright idea and everyone awoke in the night to the sound of machine-gun fire. The poor fellow was killed half out of the hole.

I was shocked and sickened at this. I asked why they didn't repair the roof and they told me because it gave them pleasure to leave the hole there as a trap. I later found out that his story was true enough: there was a machine-gun trained on the spot day and night, but the reason it was left unrepaired was because of the scarcity of labor and

materials. It didn't seem like a very good answer, but it was the best that was given me.

Of course, I was very grateful to One-eye for taking the risk he had to help me. He had eaten soap to make himself vomit. I thanked him warmly but he only smiled and said good night with a chuckle.

Fernando lay and talked it over for a long while with me. He said it was for the best that I didn't get away, for if they had ever caught me again it would have gone badly with me and besides as soon as they found out I was gone they would hold Medora. I hadn't thought of that and I was glad that I hadn't made the attempt for that reason as well as the more obvious one.

The young Fascists were sitting up in a circle talking of the war again now. Suddenly they started their song once more and it recalled all my old curiosity.

Again at the end came the salute and the chant:
*"España Libre! España Unida! España Grande!
Arriba España!"*

I sat up. "Tell me about that song of yours," I said.

They all looked at One-eye. He looked at me. Then he turned to Fernando.

"You may tell him what you like. He is going to be shot like the rest of us anyway and so it doesn't matter what he knows of us."

We all got in a circle, the youngsters with whom I had been talking of the might of Britain the night before well in the front. They looked at each other and grinned. Fernando did the talking in English with promptings from time to time from the others. Several of them understood English well enough to follow it all and translated for the benefit of the others.

"We will sing you *El Himno del Fascista Nacional* which is called *Cara al Sol!*" announced Fernando.

Once more they sang their stirring martial air through. When they finished I noticed a man's form behind them walk quietly away back to his own corner. Everyone else was supposed to be asleep, or they wouldn't have dared to sing their forbidden song. It looked like deliberate spying, especially as the man was the Jewish Agitator.

I started to say something, but decided not to interrupt now they had started to talk.

Chapter Seventeen

FERNANDO didn't seem to know where to start. They all looked at him expectantly, hoping that he as the only English-speaking one would put their case well even though he did not agree with it.

"Have you never wondered why these men die so well? Why they are not afraid?"

I said that I supposed the reason they did behave so well was because they believed in the cause they were fighting for. That seemed pretty obvious.

"Well, in order for a man to die for a cause, it must be a good cause, no?"

"Well, anyway, he must believe that it is a good cause," I amended.

One-eye had been watching us keenly and now he interrupted. He banged his fist down and said that, if Fernando could do no better than that, he

himself would tell me. Fernando could translate anything I didn't understand.

(The rest of the following conversation, then, was carried on for the most part by One-eye in French and Spanish and occasional English words; and with the help of Fernando who translated literally, without comment, the more difficult parts; and also by some of the others who made various suggestions. At times when the point was obscure or Fernando did not know the English equivalent of some phrase we spent some time trying to understand each other. I have thought it best here to eliminate all the parenthetical material for the sake of clarity and therefore report it as though it was the consecutive statements of one man.)

"Our song . . . the song of the Spanish Fascists is called *Cara al Sol*, or in English 'Face the Sun!' It is a command to us, the youth of New Spain, to help our country take its place in the sun, to be once again one of the great countries of the world!

"Once the might of the Spanish Empire was felt everywhere and all respected us, but now they laugh at us and call us decadent. We will show them if we are decadent!

"We shout aloud for all to hear how we are going to bring about this great change. By Fascism, not the Fascism of Italy and Germany but the

Fascism of Spain; in principle the same but in practice very different. The General has explained to us our program and it is summed up in a few words: "*España Unida! España Libre! España Grande! Arriba España!*"

"Tell me, Englishman . . . What does *España Unida* mean to you?"

"Well," I said cautiously, "it means literally . . . United Spain, that is to say, a Spain with all the people behind it. Catalonia and Madrid one and the same, so to speak."

"Bah!" said One-eye. "Your mind is small, England! A United Spain? Yes, certainly. But united with whom? With what? Think! . . . Why, it is so clear! A United Spain is the fulfillment of our first dream . . . a United Iberia, that is to say, one country in the peninsula, not two. A United Spain and Portugal. . . . Old Spain and New Portugal together to make New Spain."

I whistled in amazement.

"You mean that you are going to try to conquer Portugal?" I asked, suddenly wondering what on earth would prevent them.

"No, of course not," said One-eye patiently. "A conquered Portugal would be of no use in knitting together the Empire. We will unite peacefully with Portugal at the end of the war."

I asked what Portugal would say to that. They laughed.

"Portugal is a part of Iberia. Therefore she will welcome the Iberian Union. She is Fascist and so will we be. She also believes in her destiny and is eagerly looking forward to the day when she can join us."

"How do you know?" I asked doubtfully.

"Because even now she is working all the time to help our side. Don't you know that she is working with Franco? Where do you think he gets his supplies? Portugal!"

They were getting excited now and I caught a glimpse of what this meant to them. They were cracked on the subject. I was going to argue, but thought better of it.

"You follow me, English?"

I told him to go on.

"After we have accomplished the first step and have worked together, for a time, to knit the Iberian Union we will set about making a true Union and that is the second and perhaps the hardest step.

"*España Libre* which means Free Spain. Not one inch of Spain under another flag but ours! That is to say, the freeing of our country from the bondage of yours, Englishman!"

He stopped and waited for me to say something. They all looked to see how I'd take what they considered to be a bombshell.

"I suppose you mean Gibraltar?" I said. "Carry on."

"Yes, we mean Gibraltar! We will take Gibraltar! Gibraltar is rightfully ours and we will take it! Not even the British Empire will stand in our way. We will crush you!"

"You and who else?" I said sarcastically.

"You are right to ask that. Perhaps we do need help, eh?"

"Well, that's rather a tall order, you know," I said more quietly. "With all respect to your . . . er . . . United Spain, I seriously doubt whether you'll be big enough to . . . er . . . crush Britain?"

"No," said One-eye reluctantly. "It is true that you are bigger and stronger than we are—at present! But we will not be alone!"

"We will have three allies, any one of which is strong enough to topple the British lion from his throne! One, Germany; two, Italy; and three, Japan. What do you say to that, England?"

I laughed.

"Do you seriously think that those countries will start a world war because they feel sorry that you have not got Gibraltar? Why? What do they care about you? Why should they help?"

"We realize," One-eye went on, "that those countries are selfish and that they would not do anything unless they were going to get more out

of it than they put into it. But you forget that we are all knit together by a common bond—Fascism! We are all interested, selfishly of course, in seeing Fascism triumph over communism.

"Now what stands in the way of Fascism? Well, what stands in the way of Germany? Of Italy? Of us? What but Britain?"

"Russia!" I volunteered.

"Certainly Russia is opposed to Fascism politically, but not materially. We have nothing but the removal of a powerful enemy to gain from Russia's downfall; but what haven't we all got to gain from Britain's downfall?"

"All right, what have you all to gain?"

One-eye smiled and looked about him at the little circle hanging on his words. He turned to me as though satisfied with what he had seen.

"Germany will help us to smash Britain because of her colonies in Africa. Britain has no more right to them than she has to Gibraltar.

"Germany will help because England stands in her way, everywhere she turns.

"Germany will help because she is a proud country and is still suffering from the sting of her last defeat. She knows England only beat her with the help of the whole world!"

"Well, we managed without Spain," I interposed. That remark was ignored.

"And Italy! Well, do I have to tell you where

you stand in Italy's way? If it were not for Britain, Italy would be supreme in the Mediterranean. Italy wants to control the Suez Canal. Italy needs ground in North Africa; she wants her own way in Egypt. Italy must have Malta!

"Therefore Italy would welcome the chance to crush Britain. With such powerful allies she would know that it was inevitable that Italy and Fascism would triumph over England and Bolshevism."

"England is not Bolshevik," I objected.

"No, but she is anti-Fascist?"

I agreed that we probably were.

"Then she is Bolshevik! There can be no half-way measures! Fascism must crush anything that stands in its way!

"Japan will welcome a chance to get at England safely. Japan can never be supreme in the East while the present British Empire exists. Japan must expand! There is plenty of room in Australia!"

"Just a minute," I broke in. "You're getting fantastic now. I mean how can you possibly know these things? Without being rude, I must say that you are not very important cogs in the wheel of Fascism, are you? How do you know so much confidential information?"

Silence greeted this outburst and I thought I had scored. I went on to take full advantage.

"What I mean is that you assume for the time

being that I am speaking for England. Well, that is not fair for I don't know enough about it. I am only one uninformed man from that country. I freely admit that I am not qualified to speak for my country. Now how about you? Can you speak for Franco? Or do you retail to me what one of your crack-brained agitators has told you?"

"No, Englishman. We do not quote an agitator but the highest authority. I speak directly from Franco himself! I have spoken to him and he has told me of these things that I tell you. Is this not the truth?" said One-eye, turning to the others. They all confirmed it.

My disbelief must have shown, for Fernando spoke to me.

"It is true, *amigo*, two years ago One-eye saw him."

I didn't think that One-eye would lie. And I knew that Fernando wouldn't support him, if he did.

"But even Franco can be wrong," I argued. "You have no real proof!"

"Oh? And do you think, simple Englishman, that thousands of German and Italian soldiers are in Spain for their health? Why do you think that Germany and Italy are helping Franco?"

"Because they are anti-communist and for certain valuable concessions," I answered.

"Do you really think so? Then you are indeed

simple, Englishman. They are helping Franco to ensure the aid of New Spain at the critical time. The strategic value of Spain in a world war is immeasurable.

"Lastly, why do you think that Italy and Germany, former enemies, are now working hand in glove?"

I had a bright thought.

"Ah, yes, but tell me what will France be doing all this time? It certainly isn't in her interest to see Britain go under to Fascism. And how about Russia? Haven't you forgotten something?"

"Of course we have not forgotten anything! We know that those countries will also fight against us, but what does that matter? We are still big and strong enough in our combination to defeat those three.

"What pleasure it will be to make the Frenchmen eat dirt! How we would love to burn France to the ground. How every good Spaniard hates the French! With England it is a matter of necessity and we are rather sorry that we will have to crush her, but it must be done. But with France, ah, it will be a pleasure!

"France has Morocco, Algiers and Tunis. Morocco and Algiers will be ours and Tunis for Italy. Germany will take most of France herself! From Nice to Italy will be Italian. Oh, it will be good to crush France!

"Remember what a difficult time she had in the last war? Think! This time with Germany on one side and Italy on the other and Spain on the south! What chance will she have?

"Russia will also help you, but what do we care for Russia? Japan will take care of her while Germany pushes through to Moscow. Russia will go down too and that will please Germany and Italy. We do not mind so much. Russia doesn't bother us."

I thought this over for a minute.

"Now listen to me for a minute. You seem to have overlooked something. You say that your enemies will be Russia, France and England, but you are wrong.

"For England means the Empire and that means Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India. . . ."

Laughter interrupted me but One-eye shut them up and beckoned to me to go on.

". . . India, and the smaller parts of the British Empire. France means the French colonies, and Russia against Japan will bring the mass of China in with us. Wait, I'm not finished yet. You've forgotten the rest of Europe. What will Belgium do for whom the Allies did so much in the last war? How about Greece which is very much pro-British? Doesn't Rumania count or Poland or Hungary or Austria?

"And another thing you have forgotten is the United States. Now what do you say to that?"

"Englishman, this is too much. We knew you were dumb, but this is really too much! India! Do you seriously regard India as an ally? Don't you know that Fascism is already in India? Don't you know who stirs up all the trouble in India as in all your Colonies?"

"When England is in trouble, then will India take her long-awaited opportunity and strike for her freedom. Then will Egypt and many of the places you hold by force leave you. Look to the Irish Free State when trouble starts!"

"And your other Colonies? They will not support you another time. They will not be dragged into another terrible war. America is very popular in Canada these days. Suppose at the outbreak of war some skillful orators begin advocating a union with United States instead of ruin in a European war? What will Canada say? And don't think there will be any lack of necessary orators. We have seen to that."

"Well, I'll excuse you that observation," I replied. "But you just haven't had an opportunity of meeting any Canadians, that's all!"

One-eye just smiled superiorly and went on.

"You mention the rest of Europe. Englishman, we are ready for this war. We know what the rest of Europe will do to a man. Belgium for instance

is already on the way to Fascism. You didn't know that? And as for America, well, that is silly, for we know that as long as America is left alone she will not fight. Her isolation policy is too well rooted. We will not make the mistake of annoying her. We will leave her out of this war for she deserves a war of her own!"

This met with shouts of approval and hand-clapping.

One-eye turned to me again.

"Englishman, in your smug contentment you cannot, thank God, realize the holocaust that is above your head. You are like a blind man walking nearer and nearer to a pit with no one to warn him."

I thought I had better say something to refute this unflattering comparison.

"Perhaps that is the secret of our strength, One-eye. We do not shout aloud to the world what we are going to do, but we know that when the time comes we will be there and, who knows, we might even give you a surprise."

One-eye just smiled.

"All right, Englishman, you tell me this: What will you do when some day in the future, *without any warning*, we of United Spain march upon Gibraltar with the full strength of our army. And at the same time Italy seizes Malta, Somaliland and Port Said. And at the same instant Germany

marches into her former African Colonies. And at the same time India flares into rebellion. And at the same time Japan decides to oust you out of the Far East?

"Why do you smile, Englishman? Do you think it is fantastic? Do you think it is impossible? Nothing is impossible that has been planned as long as this! We want if possible to avoid a long war. We will announce nothing. Pouf—and England will be down!"

"I was smiling at your quaint conceit," I said. "If you know so much of the future, don't you think England does too? If you have made elaborate plans, don't you think we know of them and have made counter plans? Don't ask me what they are for I don't know and if I did I wouldn't tell you. But you can bet that we know what is going on and we have a trump or so up our sleeve. We have always been like that!"

"Yes, it is true that England has usually played a very deep game, but in these days it is no longer true. In the past all your leaders acted like damned fools, but were really great men.

"Japan will have all of the Far East. She will be mistress of China and Russia and Australia."

"What will that leave for Spain?" I queried.

One-eye grinned.

"Do you remember that I said the United States deserved a war of its own? Well, there is the answer

to what Spain will get out of the great division.

"We would like to wipe out the memory of the Spanish-American War. Germany would welcome an opportunity to pay back America for interfering at the wrong time in the last war. Japan has had her eye on Alaska for a long time. Besides America stands in her way in China.

"But then perhaps a war with America will not be necessary. Perhaps America will have the sense not to object when we want to found the New Spanish Empire in South America. Perhaps she will realize that it is better for her not to! We plan to form the Union of Spanish-speaking Peoples with all the Spanish-speaking countries of the world united under a common head. That head will be Spain. That is what we mean by *España Grande!* The power and the glory of the Spain of old in the New World."

He stopped talking and the others murmured approval. We sat in silence for a moment in the dark, I, marveling to myself that they could dream such dreams, and they, drunk with the ecstasy of the idea of a world-conquering Spain. Nobody talked; we all sat in the dark and watched the cigarettes glow. Somebody started softly singing their hymn. It was soon taken up by all. They finished and there was a split second of silence; then came their shout:

"España Unida! España LIBRE! España Grande!
ARRIBA ESPAÑA!"

The phrase echoed around the old walls and died away. Some of the sleepers stirred uneasily in their sleep. Nobody awoke, but it had sounded ominously loud to me.

Chapter Eighteen

THE next morning I was again awakened by the shouting of the guards. It was another early morning *forma*. We stumbled to our places sleepily and the counting began. We were counted as usual a half a dozen times and then they seemed to agree that the number arrived at was approximately correct, but still we were not given the order to break up. Some of the prisoners after minutes of waiting began to drift away from the line, but were soon ordered back by the head guard.

After ten minutes the guards suddenly went round shouting at us to look smart and straighten up for the commandant of the prison was to inspect us.

The commandant came in, a tall, thin wisp of a man with a pointed black beard. He was followed

by two others. The party paused at the door and the commandant asked the head guard a question. The head guard indicated one of the prisoners and the commandant strode over and ordered him to step out.

The Agitator stepped out of line and answered some low-spoken questions. A murmur went through the massed men.

Then the commandant started to walk up the line followed by the Agitator. They had covered about forty when the Agitator stopped and pointed out one of the prisoners. Somebody else took his name. The party moved on. I couldn't see who had been picked out.

This happened twice more and then the party started to come down my line. They stopped as the Agitator stood and pointed a finger at One-eye. Then they moved on and the next one he picked out was Fernando. I began to suspect what it was.

The party was getting near me now. They stopped at Jean, two to my left. I could hear what the Agitator said:

"That man also, commandant, was of the party last night. He did not sing, but he saluted."

I knew now that the Agitator was picking out the boys who had sung the Fascist hymn the night before and all the ones who had been there. But Jean had not been there. However, the Agitator had a score from the first day to work off on Jean.

It was lucky that Jean couldn't understand what he was saying, for I know he would have stepped out of the line and started to strangle the man if he had known what it was all about.

Now the party was near me and I knew what that meant. The Agitator's eyes met mine and I glared back. He passed on. A little later in the line another of the Fascists were picked out. Then the commandant left and we were given the order to disperse.

The Agitator went calmly back to his place as though nothing had happened. I couldn't help admiring his courage. Everyone was angry with him and some of the men he had denounced had nothing to lose by doing him harm, yet he calmly walked about among them.

We stood about in little knots talking of this latest development. No one seemed agreed on what it meant. I kept my ideas to myself. Bill said it was nothing important and Jean wasn't to worry. Kurt said that he suspected the Agitator had reported people who had been talking treason. Willy the German thought that the Agitator was probably a government agent in disguise. He said this once or twice, convinced himself, and then went off to make friends with the Agitator. Yankee went around telling everybody that the ones who had been picked out that morning were to be transferred to another prison and the guards were com-

ing in with machine-guns late at night and mow the rest of us down like wheat, but that Franco was in a battleship just off the coast and would blow Montjuich to bits as soon as they started.

The morning wore on and nothing happened and so we forgot the incident. Fernando, One-eye and I discussed it and I told them I had seen the Agitator prowling around the night before, but they weren't very impressed. Fernando was worried that it might delay his release. One-eye didn't say much; I think he felt they had talked too much the night before.

Bill and I were eating our lunch when Jean strolled up. But what a Jean! Gone were the months' beard and the shaggy hair which decorated the rest of us. He was rudely shaven on cheek and head. His head shone like a baby's except where the razor had slipped.

We asked wonderingly where he had had the marvelous toilette, and he told us that Faestano, his tattooed friend, had a safety razor blade which he sharpened on his hand and had shaved him with. What was more, Faestano had sent him to say that while he had the soap and water Bill and I were also welcome to a shave. We looked at Jean's furrowed face and agreed that we were both growing beards!

In the afternoon post I had a letter from Medora. This one I could read myself as the Spanish lessons had taught me quite a bit. It was posted about a week before and it told me that she would have to go to Figueras to get my papers, but that I would certainly be freed by Monday or Tuesday. As it was now Thursday, I was able to smile at this and be thankful that I had not received the letter in time to build up my hopes for those two days.

I was worried to hear about Medora going to Figueras, for I knew that they would arrest her at the slightest wrong move. I tried to figure out some way I could get word to her to get out of Spain.

I spoke to Oskar about it. The invalid was now able to sit up and spent all his time writing letters to various women all over the world. He wrote in French, German, Italian and Spanish, telling each of them much the same thing to judge by the words he asked various prisoners for. Kurt would help him with the German letters, and an Italian prisoner named Tito would help him with those in Italian at the price of a glass of wine a day. And Bill would help him with both French and Spanish. He sent three or four of these up to the guards each day and they were always sent back with regrets. No one could write out.

So Oskar couldn't help me much. He suggested

that I bribe a guard to take Medora a message. Willy the German was listening to this as to most conversations and here he interrupted to say that he knew a guard, who came on at night, who was a Mexican and spoke English and might take a letter to Medora. I agreed to see this guard that night.

I asked Oskar why he wrote to so many women and he said that was because of two things.

"One, because each woman sends me so little money at a time that I must have a great many, and two, because my wife and two children in the Argentine need so much of the money I get that there is never enough for me," he explained simply.

I asked him why he didn't work for his money and he said that obviously if he could get as much money working he would, but salaries were so small. He seemed to think I asked rather stupid questions.

I asked Bill what he thought of the guard idea and he said that I wouldn't have enough money. I had only fifty pesetas and any guard would want at least a couple of hundred.

Anyway I determined to try. The Mexican was a shifty-eyed specimen with a bright-colored rug over his shoulder. I asked him if he had ever been in America.

"Sure, old-timer, I be in Texas for coupla year. I learn spik fine Englis' there."

I told him about Medora and said that I wanted to send her a message telling her to go home because it wasn't good for women in Spain now.

He agreed and seemed willing to listen to reason. I told him that he could read the note and see that it didn't contain anything it shouldn't.

He said that, given a sum of money to help his conscience along, he expected he could do it. "How much?" I asked.

"Five hundred pesetas," he hazarded. I showed him the fifty pesetas I had and told him to come down to that. He said it was impossible to do it for less than four or perhaps three hundred. Finally he came down to two hundred and fifty and there he stayed.

I went off to find Manuel. He had greatly admired my wrist watch a few days before. I found him and came to the point immediately. No, he didn't want particularly to buy it. How much had I paid for it? I had paid five pounds, so I added a couple of pounds, turned the result into pesetas and threw in a handful for luck.

"It cost me," I lied carefully, "four hundred and fifty pesetas."

"I'll give you one hundred and fifty."

After a good bit of wrangling I persuaded Manuel to give me two hundred pesetas. He was much better at that sort of thing than I, for before the bargain was clinched he seemed to be only

interested out of pure friendship and charity, but as soon as he had the watch, he informed me triumphantly that he would have gone to three hundred! He asked me what was the lowest I would have taken and seemed surprised when I told him two hundred pesetas.

I wrote a long note to Medora. I tried to make her see the danger she was in and to persuade her to leave Spain immediately. I told her that I would get out eventually and meet her in France. I made it clear that it was absolutely necessary that she send me a written reply so that I would know the guard had delivered it.

The Mexican was still hanging about the door talking to Willy the German who, as well as I could see, was trying to talk himself into a percentage of the bribe. He didn't seem to be getting on very well.

The Mexican saw me coming and shut Willy up.

"You got the money?"

I told him that I had and gave him the note and the address and careful instructions about waiting for an answer. Then I took out the two hundred and fifty pesetas.

"Here is the money," I said, waving the bills in front of him. "Now I know you can take the money and not deliver the note. But don't try it. It won't be any use coming back and telling me there

is no reply or giving me an oral reply or anything like that. If you do, I swear that I will go to the commandant and tell him the whole thing about this bribe! Do you understand?"

He swore that he wouldn't think of double-crossing me, that he wouldn't do that to anyone for a dirty couple of hundred pesetas. I had to be satisfied with that and I gave him the money. It disappeared beneath the blanket and he left.

The next day was my third Name Day. We were all up early for everyone expected something exceptional after the picking out of certain prisoners the day before. Most people were agreed that those prisoners were all to be shot. Jean was in happy ignorance of all this, for he spoke no Spanish at all. He had no idea why he had been picked out of the line and I didn't tell him. I knew that if he heard what the Agitator had said about him he would get himself into more trouble.

Fernando came around to see me. He didn't seem to be nervous and I asked him if he thought his name would be called. I didn't really think so. He said he was sure that it would not be, for hadn't his father told him that he was to be freed? He didn't think they would shoot anyone just on the word of the Agitator alone.

The guard with the names was an hour late that day and when he did finally come everyone was

on edge. He went through the preliminaries and we learnt that ten were to be shot the next day. Then he started on the names.

They were all strange to me except two which I recognized as a couple of the younger Fascist boys who had taken part in the argument of the night before. Fernando and Jean were not mentioned. When it was all over I turned, relieved, to Fernando, to find him as pale as the walls.

"What's the matter?" I asked wonderingly. Perhaps one of those youngsters was an intimate friend. But I didn't think so.

"Poor One-eye! What shall we do without him to lead us? That damn Agitator! This is all on account of him!" he said bitterly.

I had never heard One-eye's real name and so I hadn't recognized it. Poor One-eye indeed! He was such a courageous little fellow we would all miss having him about.

The news that he was to be shot had caused quite a stir. He had been regarded like the old priest of eighty-four as one of the permanent fixtures of the place. All were indignant, not because he was to die but because it was thought that his death was the result of the Agitator's revelations.

Faestano, the tattooed man, had been one of One-eye's most fervent admirers and as soon as he heard the news he did the only thing that seemed logical to him. He found the Agitator, persuaded him to

come to the back of the room and started to work on him.

The Agitator fought gamely, but was no match for the experienced dirtiness of Faestano. The fight started off with a faint resemblance to a boxing match, but soon resolved into a fouling contest. Nothing was barred. The two men kicked and clawed and bit in the clinches and gouged and only incidentally punched. Jean enjoyed it immensely; he covered up the noise of the fighting by a long-drawn-out series of Swiss yodels. This attracted a crowd almost as quickly as the fight and they formed a ring the guards couldn't see through. Jean's yodeling supplied sufficient explanation.

The fight ended with the Agitator being knocked unconscious. Faestano didn't see why that was any reason to stop the fight. In his opinion the real beating up didn't start until your opponent was unconscious. But some of the rest intervened and Faestano was held down until he cooled off a bit.

"Be quiet, Faestano," somebody said. "If you went on with it you would kill him!"

"Of course!" answered Faestano simply.

The Agitator came around all right but certainly looked the worse for wear. After lunch he went up to one of the guards and demanded to see the head guard. He was told that the head guard would be down in about an hour.

This went around the prison and we all realized

that the Agitator was probably going to try to get Faestano into trouble about the fight. We all agreed that if he did everyone would swear that the Agitator made an unprovoked attack on poor Faestano.

About an hour later the head guard came in and asked the Agitator what he wanted to say. For answer he beckoned the head guard to come with him and they marched over to where Faestano was innocently playing draughts with Jean. We all got as close to them as possible.

"That man," said the Agitator, pointing at Faestano, "has a razor concealed in his right boot and he has used it to shave this other one."

The guards grabbed Faestano and took off his boot and found the razor. He and Jean were marched away and the head guard said they would have a little sample of the dungeons.

This was the first time I had heard of the dungeons and I was most curious. I hunted up Yankee who knew all such things.

"Hello, kid! Say, thatsa too bad about those two, eh? They go to the punishment cells! Lissen, it's bad down there, terrible bad! You know what? They chain you in the dark! Chain you by the ankles and the arms to the wet walls of the cell. Yes, sir, it's plenty wet. The sewer of the castle runs through these cells and you stand in the running water up to your knees! After one day you nearly crazy, after two days you scream all the

time, three days and you *are* crazy and four days you die! The rats eat your feet off!"

I shuddered at this realistic description. I don't know how much of it was true. Certainly when Jean and Faestano were returned to us the next day they looked as though they had been through something bad enough to leave permanent scars on a couple of very tough characters. But I am ahead of my story.

Fernando and I sat and talked to the Fascists. I didn't feel too sympathetic, for whenever I looked at them I thought of the wild things they had told me. Still they were human beings and it was difficult to realize they were my enemies now. One-eye didn't need any comforting. He was the life of the party. He seemed exhilarated by the thought of death so near and he imparted some of this exhilaration to the others. It was one of the noisiest detachments of condemned that I saw go out.

At the door One-eye turned and made a little speech which the Agitator booed loudly. One-eye turned this into a laugh against the other by some witty remark. He waved once more and his eye rested on me. He stood up a little straighter.

"Good night, English!" he shouted.

Only that—but I knew what he meant. He put more meaning into his only English phrase the last time he used it than ever before.

Good night, Englishman. Now watch how a Spaniard dies! This is the courage of New Spain you are watching. We may die, but just watch New Spain, England! Watch and beware!

I felt what he meant, but I waved no less heartily for that. It seemed impossible that One-eye could represent the enemy, for One-eye was a human being. And if you once realize that the other side in a war consists of human beings you might even worry about killing them and that would never do!

I waited up with Fernando until the visitors were sent for. Fernando was One-eye's visitor. He told me he wasn't looking forward to the ordeal. The farewell business was supposed to be pretty bad. But he went up with the others and I told him to wish them luck from me.

When he returned the next morning just after the shots, he was more upset than was usual with the returning visitors. He was pale and shaking with anger. As soon as the guards pushed him into the room, followed by the others, he broke out into a tirade of abuse. We finally quieted him down and he explained what had set him off.

He told us that One-eye had been flippant to the very end and had provoked the guards by his sarcastic references to their courage and to what the Rebels would do to them when they reached Barcelona. When they marched him out against

the wall he insulted the captain of the firing squad and led the others in the Fascist song.

The order had been given to fire and all fell except One-eye who was untouched. Fernando maintained that this was intentional cruelty on their part. The firing squad then reloaded and took aim again at the solitary figure standing singing at the top of his voice in the midst of nine dead ones. The second volley brought him down, but didn't kill him. All the shots went into his arms and legs. He lay on the ground screaming with agony, and the captain went over to him and stood laughing above him.

"You don't sing so much now, do you?" he said and shot him through the head with a revolver.

The others all confirmed Fernando's story and a wave of indignation at this barbarous treatment swept through the prison. Somebody yelled an insult at one of the guards and the guard cuffed him. The prisoners all started to boo and hiss and pound the floor. Things began to look ugly.

The guards ran aimlessly about for a few minutes and at length decided to close the main door. A few of the prisoners tried to rush the door, but were beaten back and the door was locked. The rest of them continued the booing and hissing for some time.

At length the door was opened and a commandant strode in followed by some of the guards.

We were ordered to line up. We did so and then the commandant gave us a little talk explaining what would happen if there was any more trouble. Our food would be stopped for good and if that didn't tame us he had something else that would. He beckoned outside and three soldiers came in carrying a machine-gun. He told us that the machine-gun would be mounted outside. He finished by saying that to punish us for the row that had already been kicked up, letters would be stopped for two days as well as outside packages and that we would go without lunch that day. He stormed out leaving five hundred well-chastened prisoners behind.

There was a lot of bad feeling for the rest of that day. Some of the prisoners lined up for lunch as usual, convinced that the commandant would change his mind. But lunch time came and went and we were still hungry.

About three Faestano and Jean were returned, looking decidedly the worse for wear. They were immediately surrounded by a crowd eager to hear about the dreaded solitary cells, but they were both too exhausted to say anything. They found a corner and went to sleep. Both of them had swollen wrists and ankles and Jean's wrist was caked with blood. They slept all the rest of the day and when evening came they woke up for a few minutes and asked for something to eat. Food was very scarce

and all they could have was some dried bread which they ate avidly.

The guards were very ill-tempered and denied us all privileges. The door was closed an hour early and the machine-gun outside moved up nearer to it.

There was much discussion in the prison as to how this would all end. Yankee predicted a whole-sale massacre one night.

"You see one night!" he told us. "You wake up and the guards will be at the door with a machine-gun and then rat-ta-ta-ta-ta! And they kill us all!"

Despite these gloomy predictions Bill and I decided to go to sleep calmly, for we still believed that they wouldn't dare to shoot Englishmen down.

The sleeping arrangement that eventful night was Bill and I and Fernando on three sides of the mattress that Oskar slept on, with Jean curled up next to me and Faestano on the other side of him next to the wall. As I got ready for sleep I noticed that both Jean and Faestano had gone to sleep with their boots on. I did think of taking Jean's off, but the long lacings looked like too much work and anyway he was sleeping peacefully.

I eventually dropped off into a troubled sleep myself and was dreaming that the guards were chasing us with machine-guns when I felt myself

being shaken. I sat up and could see that two of the guards were standing over me.

"What do you want?" I asked, thinking of the first night when they had taken Amanda out like this. The guards didn't answer me immediately, but woke Bill up. He sat up too.

"What the hell is the meaning of this intrusion? How dare you wake me up in the middle of the night? This shall be reported!"

"Shhh! Don't talk so much, Englishman. We're not going to hurt you. Listen, we have news for you. Good news! The English king has abdicated. He has run away with an American woman! It is the beginning of the downfall of the monarchy of your country! What do you think of that, eh?" He grinned and nudged the other guard.

Bill said, "No, is that so? When did you hear about it?" But I broke in—

"Don't be silly, Bill. Of course it's not so! Don't be an ass. It's just another one of their crackpot rumors. Of course it's not true! Go away and let us sleep."

"Ho! So it is not true, eh?" gloated one of them. "How do you know more about it than we do? You are stuck down here and cannot hear any news. How do you know it is not true?"

"Because," I answered with great dignity, "because English kings do not do that sort of thing. It is impossible!"

They went away finally, promising to bring us papers in the morning proving it. Bill and I discussed it for some time without coming to an agreement. I maintained that it was impossible and Bill said he believed it. In the end we decided to try and get some more sleep. I saw that it was just four o'clock in the morning.

As I turned over I noticed Jean's feet again but they were now bare. He must have awakened and taken his boots off, I thought.

I awoke again at nine, ravenously hungry. I began to look forward to the midday rice. I went outside to wash and one of the guards approached me with a paper. He said the night guard had asked him to give it to the crazy Englishmen who didn't believe their king had abdicated. I took this to Bill and we read the news. I was shocked, but had to admit it was probably true. The news was spreading round the prison now and we were soon surrounded by a mob of prisoners asking questions. The most common question was: Who was to be the King now?

"The Duke of York, the King's brother," we told them.

And what would be his name? This one rather stumped us. We talked it over and decided the Duke of York's name was Henry. So we told everybody that the new King of England was King Henry the ninth.

While all this discussion was going on there was some sort of a disturbance at the other end of the prison. Shouting and guards running in and out. Yankee burst into our group much excited.

"Say, lissen, he's dead! He was killed in the night! Didn't I tell you someone would killa that guy? He sure is dead now, you bet."

"Who?" cried a dozen voices.

"The Agitator! Somebody garroted him in the night!"

"Where's Faestano?" somebody shouted. "He said he would kill him!"

The crowd swept away to join in all the excitement. I turned to Jean who was sleeping through all this. Faestano had gone from his sleeping place. I shook Jean and he finally woke up.

"Wake up, Jean. Somebody has killed the Agitator. Come on, get up!"

He sat up at that and stared at me, surprised.

"No!" he swore. "He's been killed? Who did it? How was it done?"

He started to pull his boots on.

"Nobody knows who did it," I said. "But most of them think it was Faestano."

He didn't say anything to that, but just continued to lace up one of his boots.

"And as to how he was killed, well, Yankee said he was garroted," I went on, "and that means that he was . . ."

I stopped talking suddenly, for I noticed that his right boot had no lace in it! He reached under his coat-pillow and drew out the long piece of raw-hide. He started to put it into the boot.

"Yes?" he said calmly. "What does it mean to you?"

I tore my eyes from the long sinewy cord.

"And that means," I went on weakly, "that he was strangled with a ligature."

Chapter Nineteen

JEAN apparently hadn't noticed my hesitation, for he calmly went on lacing the boot. I stared at his strong deft hands and tried to visualize them strangling someone. It wasn't difficult. There was no doubt but that he was physically capable. Had he killed the Agitator? If so, what should I do about it? I didn't know the answers.

We joined the crowd gathered around the body. Some thoughtful person had thrown a blanket over him. All we could see were a few shapeless lumps bearing no resemblance to a human body.

"How do they know he's dead? Has the doctor been?" I asked Kurt.

"No, the doctor is not up yet," he laughed. "But he's dead all right. If you could have seen his face . . . ugh! Black as your shoes!"

Jean clucked his tongue sympathetically at this. It was a terrible thing, he agreed. Where was Faestano, he wanted to know?

Faestano had been found washing. And had sworn that he had not done it. He said that he knew nothing about it. He had slept all night long. Nobody believed a word he said. Many of the prisoners privately congratulated him.

But now two of the soldiers came in and carried out the body. The blanket slipped from his face as they carelessly picked him up and I saw what Kurt had meant. His face was a dirty blue with an expression of profound wonderment seemingly painted on. It made me violently sick.

All this time the prisoners had been standing about in groups excitedly discussing the news. But now the guards shouted the order to form up and the rumor went round that the commandant was coming. A burly guard burst into the lavatories, where I was peacefully vomiting, and herded us all out to join the others.

The fiery commandant erupted into the room and strode up and down in front of us for an impressive minute. Then he started.

"So! So! This is the way you answer me, eh? You thought perhaps I was joking yesterday, did you? The first day after I punish you and this happens! Perhaps you like going without your food? Perhaps you think there are no bullets in the ma-

chine-gun? Eh? Answer me! Do you know who I am?"

There was a low chorus of "No, commandant," or "Yes, commandant," according to which question was being answered. This infuriated him still more. He breathed deeply and passed his hand dramatically over his brow.

"This is the way you repay all my kindness to you. Many commandants would have shot you all long ago, but I treated you well and this is the thanks I get. Come, now, who did it? Which one of you was so thoughtless of the others' comfort? Come, many of you must know. Who were this man's enemies? If I am told now, instantly, then I will only punish him. . . . Who will speak?"

No one murmured, although several glanced meaningly at poor Faestano.

"All right!" shouted the commandant. "You are all shielding him, eh? Well, then you will all suffer! Fools! Do you think I don't know who it is? Guards, arrest that man!" Here he pointed to the pale and shaking Faestano, who immediately began protesting in a loud wail.

The guards took him out and upstairs and the commandant stood and stared at us.

"I will think over the best form of punishment for you," he said quietly. "It will not be forgotten!"

He left a very chastened five hundred for the second time in twenty-four hours.

This left me with a pretty problem. Could I let Faestano be shot for what I was practically sure my friend Jean had done? I found Fernando and told him the whole story about the shoelace. It didn't sound very convincing evidence when put into words.

Fernando stared at me for a minute.

"You can do nothing, Peter, nothing. First, you have no evidence at all, only guesswork. Then you would not help Faestano (whom you don't like) by talking of Jean (who is your friend), for they would shoot them both. Thirdly, you would be drawing attention to yourself, which is always bad. Fourthly, you would be in danger afterwards here in prison. Lastly, you must realize that you are in prison now where we do not act the same as we would if we were at home. What interest have you in seeing them catch the one who killed the Agitator? Why help them when it will hinder you? Please do not do this, Peter, for it will delay your release and we will never start our importing business!"

I said that I would think it over. If there were only some way to save Faestano without giving up Jean!

The commandant evidently realized that he couldn't possibly keep us without food for much

longer, for we got lunch that day. It was over an hour late and we had nearly given it up altogether when it came. Only rice stew but the first food most of the prison had had for forty-nine hours. I don't think a kernel was wasted.

After lunch I joined our crowd who were still excitedly talking of the murder. Many were remembering strange noises and suspicious facts. Oskar had heard a muffled groan and this gave him the spotlight, until Willy the German turned up with a dying scream in the early hours of the morning. Willy was then the center of attraction but not for long. Yankee beat them all.

It seemed he had awakened in the middle of the night with a queer feeling of apprehension. He had glanced across the prison and seen Faetano creeping back to his bed with a knotted handkerchief in his teeth.

Why hadn't he shouted? Why hadn't he looked at the Agitator? Why hadn't he thought of it in the morning when the Agitator failed to get up?

He had fallen off to sleep immediately and in the morning he thought it was a dream. So did I.

In the afternoon Fernando's people came again. He was walking with me when he was called and dashed off to return in a few minutes.

"Come, they want to meet you," he said, dragging me to my feet and out of the room. "I have

told my father about the business! It is all right with the guard. Didn't I tell you my father was an important man?"

We went upstairs to the first floor above ours under armed escort. The guard opened a door for us and remained outside.

Fernando had three visitors waiting for him, all watching the door anxiously as though they were afraid he might not come.

The room was a bare stone cell without windows. A single low-watt bulb supplied a little light. The people looked too clean to be true. They made me suddenly conscious of my own filthy state.

The man was tall, not unlike Fernando, and his hair and beard were white. He looked very old as he held out his hand to his son. He bowed to me when Fernando told them who I was and I saw that he was not really an old man in years. I could guess how he had aged in the last few months.

Fernando's mother was dark and buxom. He crossed to her immediately. She kept her tearful eyes fixed on his face. She didn't know I was there.

The third visitor was Fernando's brother, a delicate, dark, serious little boy, who looked tragically out of place in that forbidding room.

The father shook hands with me and his mother gave me a quick smile. The little one followed his father's example and shook my hand solemnly.

Señor Pasqual said something about being grate-

ful for my kindness to Pasqual and I awkwardly tried to say what Fernando's friendship had meant to me. I didn't do it very well.

There was a deadlock for some seconds and then they produced a large hamper. It was for both of us, they said. I don't know how true that was, but I was overcome with gratitude at the time.

Then Fernando's father told him that he had a definite promise from the Chief of Police that Fernando would be released in the next few days. This news bucked us all up and we were getting along well when the guard opened the door and told us the visit was over.

I shook hands with the father who said he would see me again. Then I turned to the youngster.

He held my hand for a minute and looked up into my face.

"My brother is coming home soon, isn't he, Señor?" he asked earnestly.

"Very soon now!" I promised him.

He seemed most satisfied with this and thanked me gravely, as though I were the prison governor.

His mother had said very little up to now, but when he had to go she began to talk quickly, giving him messages from friends and all the time glancing at the impatient guard apologetically, as though to impress him with the importance of what she had to say. But at last even she couldn't keep it up any longer and she collapsed in a fit

of weeping. Fernando tried to comfort her, but we had to go back.

She said that she would see him home in a day or two. His father told me that if I was not out by the next Sunday they would come and visit me.

I thanked him but told him I was sure I would be out by then.

Monday morning was another early *forma*. We expected another lecture from the commandant; perhaps this would be the announcement of the form our punishment was to take.

He came in laughing and jollying the guards. I heard him ask one of them how many more of the prisoners had been killed. He stopped in front of us.

"Well, how are all my dangerous prisoners this morning? The doctor tells me that you are suffering from lack of food and sunshine. He also tells me it is very dirty in here. So I have said . . . I have said that today I am going to let you go upstairs on the roof for two hours! You will get plenty of sunshine and while you are gone this room will be cleaned! Am I not good to you? Ha!"

We were all very surprised at this sudden concession. Some were suspicious, saying it was a trap to get us upstairs where they could shoot us, but most of us thought that if they wanted to do that

the long room was a most convenient place for it.

I was glad of any chance to get out in the air again and I grabbed my blanket and was one of the first in line. Fernando and Bill soon joined me.

Bill was jubilant. He claimed that this was a sign that the prison authorities were afraid of us. They were trying to placate us in case the other side won the war.

Fernando was armed with a selection from the hamper and said he didn't care why we were going upstairs; the thing that mattered was that we would see the sun again. He hadn't seen the sun for five months except where it was shining through the slits in the wall that served for windows.

We formed in a long double line and marched upstairs. When we suddenly came to the courtyard where all the soldiers had gathered to meet us, the light was too much; it blinded us and we all had to stop a minute and close our eyes. They pushed us on and we stumbled up to the roof.

As soon as I could see I turned to Fernando. Poor Fernando, I hadn't been able to see downstairs in ~~the~~ semi-darkness how ill he looked. Here in the brilliant sunshine he looked like a case for a hospital. His eyes were two sunken patches of black and his cheeks a nasty yellow; his bones stood out on him in ugly bumps all over.

Bill was staring at me.

"You look very ill, lad," he said, shaking his head mournfully. "You're a nasty color and as scrawny as a boarding-house chicken. It will be a long time before you're over the effects of this."

This from Rigby! Why, he looked worse than any of us. Gone was the fatness of a few weeks before. The red flush of his cheeks had become a mottled grayish purple. It would be a long time before he got over the effects, I told him.

But while we were sympathizing with each other the rest of the prisoners were wildly celebrating. They danced and jumped and shouted for joy. Some of them simply stood and drew in great mouthfuls of the fresh air while others stripped off their shirts and truly bathed in the sun.

When things quieted down somewhat we were able to look about and see where we were. They had marched us on to one roof that was too high above the ground to jump from and had only one entrance. We were covered by three machine-guns, one at each end and the other at the top of the steps. But the soldiers mounting them didn't look very serious about it.

Soon the wine man came around and to Bill's and my great joy he sold beer that day. We bought three liter bottles and carried them back to where Fernando was disgorging his treasures.

We had rolls and cheese and two vegetables called peppers, rather sharp-tasting. We ate this slowly

with the beer. Afterwards some bitter chocolate and dry bread. We made this last as long as possible. We finished up with a spoonful of condensed milk from our one tin. The meal was delicious. When it was over we sighed and licked our fingers and swore that if we ever got back to a place where one could have a choice of food we'd never leave it.

Yankee came strolling up and asked if he could join us. As there wasn't any food left no one minded. Bill told him to sit down and make himself comfortable which he did. We had all finished our beer except Bill who had been nursing his to make it go a long way. Yankee asked for a drink. Bill looked startled for a moment and then settled the matter by drinking down the rest in a single swallow.

Yankee was angry at this shabby treatment, especially since he had been supporting Bill for some time. He strode off saying Bill was a dirty pig and that he'd regret it soon. Bill laughed and said he had never liked him anyway.

At the end of the two hours we were marched downstairs again to the room. It had been slightly washed and liberally disinfected in our absence. The strong smell of the germicide was a pleasant relief to the odor of five hundred unwashed bodies.

Everyone was exhausted at the unaccustomed ef-

fort of walking up the three flights of stairs and we got ready to sleep unusually early.

About nine o'clock there was another sensation. Faestano was returned unharmed! He had been questioned for hours and then they had given him up in disgust. He was very proud of himself and had quite recovered his old time cockiness.

He strutted about telling everyone of the witty answers he had made to the questions.

Most of us thought that he had been sent back just for a day and that his name would be among the condemned on the next day's list.

We were up early because of the Name Day. I took Fernando aside to tell him of the bright idea I had had in the night.

My idea was to persuade one of the young Fascists, who was condemned, to confess to killing the Agitator. It wouldn't make any difference to him anyway and it would save Faestano's life. I was sure that one of those wild kids would be only too willing to do it. Fernando agreed that it was a good idea, but he didn't think we should wait until the names were read out. Why not put it to them now?

We went and found them and they greeted me cordially enough, although I hadn't seen anything of them since the night they had told me of their song. It seemed strange without One-eye there. They lacked a real leader now. Besides that there

were only twenty-seven of the original hundred left. Over thirty had been shot while I was there.

Fernando told them of the idea and they agreed to do it. No one seemed particularly enthusiastic, but they said they would do it.

Fernando and I went back and waited for the names to come. The usual time was eleven o'clock, but eleven came and half-past and there was no sign of the guard. At twelve two soldiers from the kitchen came in with two large tubs of sardines and a couple of sacks of bread. This was so unexpected that it caught even the most competent scroungers like Bill unprepared. Immediately there was a scramble for tin plates.

The sardines were good, although they had not been properly cooked. They were caught fresh and dropped into boiling olive oil. They hadn't cooked all through, but we ate them. Some of the more hardy or hungrier prisoners went around collecting the heads and tails from finicky people who wouldn't eat them.

After this we suddenly realized that the names had not been called out. Somebody asked the guards why not and they said that we had so charmed the commandant that he had decided not to kill any more of us. Anyway there were no names called out that day.

Oskar received a large package in the afternoon's parcels and we all hung about to see what it was.

Somebody had sent him a complete set of sheets, blankets, pillow cases, pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers. He frantically went through the packet for something to eat and was disgusted not to find anything.

"These women," he said bitterly, "are damned fools and this one is the damndest fool of them all!"

Somebody asked him which one that was and he said he would tell us all about her.

He said that he was an Argentinian who made his living out of foolish women. The only one he had ever met who was smarter than he was was a girl who had married him first, then told him that she had not a penny and that she knew where he got his money and to get out and get enough for two. He laughed as he told us this, but ruefully. He didn't dare leave off supporting her because he was sure she'd find him and make him continue.

All his life he had been looking for some woman with a lot of money and little sense and now he thought he had found her. All he would tell us was that she was a Hungarian with lots of money.

"All she does is talk, talk, talk, all day long. But I have found out that she has much valuable land in Hungary. Now here is where I am smart. I have persuaded her to sell the land and give me all the money to take her to Argentina. Yes, but I am smarter than that! You see, I have arranged for a

friend of mine to buy the land for me in his name. He will offer her half what it is worth and I will persuade her to sell at his price. Then I will re-sell at the proper price and pocket the profit!"

That was the girl who was sending him the sleeping outfit. I felt sorry for her. He said that he had written her letters telling her how ill he was, hoping that she would have enough sense to send him invalid food. These letters were written before he was transferred to Montjuich and he hadn't been able to get into touch with her since. His one fear was that she might meet someone else who was "smarter" than he.

Bill and Yankee had never made up their differences and snarled at each other whenever they passed. Yankee told people of the various things he was going to do to Bill, and Bill sent round his threats by return. All this was amusing to the rest of us. Faestano was usually the message carrier and he delighted in adding juicy insults of his own.

On Wednesday morning Yankee won the battle. He reported to the head guard that Bill was lousy. He swore that Bill was a walking menagerie of different species of fleas and lice. He described how he had seen large animals emerge from Bill's neck and lose themselves in his hair. He finished up by calling on a few of his friends to testify

that Bill had never from the first day gone out to the taps.

This was not strictly true, for I remember once when the wine was running low Bill had gone outside and added water to it.

Anyway the head guard had ordered Bill to be deloused. Poor Bill knew nothing about this until the guards came and took him out. Everyone waited joyfully for his return.

He came back in a couple of hours shaved, scrubbed and disinfected. He had been given an antiseptic pair of trousers and an antiseptic shirt and an antiseptic pair of shoes. He had lost all his dirt but none of his dignity. He strode back to the prison and frowned majestically at the roars of laughter which greeted him.

He went over to Yankee and told him what he thought of him. He said that Yankee was a liar and that his father was a liar, if he knew who his father was, and that he was the son of a thousand policemen. At which deadly insult the whole prison rocked and formed a ring around the two funny men.

Bill went over to one corner and put up his fists and aimed a few devastating blows at nothing. This settled the matter for Yankee. He said that he did not choose to fight, and Bill was declared the winner on a disqualification. I had been seconding Bill and I was just congratulating him on a mag-

nificent fight, when Faestano who had been Yankee's second came over and pushed Bill down. Bill got up in as slow a time as he could honorably manage and started to box Faestano. Faestano grinned and looked as though he was about to sit down to a good dinner.

I grabbed Faestano and playfully pushed him away, explaining that it wasn't his fight.

"Ho! So you want some, do you?" he yelled and came for me.

I avoided his rush and kept out of the way of his blows and kept playfully tapping him in return, at the same time trying to persuade him to give it up. I didn't want to fight him, because I knew it would get both of us into trouble and there was nothing to fight about, and on top of that I was pretty sure he'd half kill me with his dirty tactics. So I kept on boxing but pulling my punches and he kept swinging haymakers all over the place. He was ignorant of any science and I had no trouble in keeping out of his way.

All this time I was keeping up a running speech designed to make him realize the stupidity of what we were doing. But he just wanted to land one good one and then he would be happy to stop.

Some idiot began yelling encouragement to me and making sarcastic remarks about the great Faestano and that enraged him even more. He caught me in a corner of the crowd and nicked my

nose with one of his wild ones. I realized then that I had better get to work in earnest. I stopped pulling them and he looked rather surprised. I took advantage of his hesitation to get in a few good ones; they hurt him but they didn't stop him at all.

We were really going at it now and the crowd was roaring encouragement. Suddenly I saw my opportunity and hit him as hard as I could exactly where I knew it would knock him out. It shook his head a bit, but he kept on coming. I knew then that I wasn't going to win that fight, for he only had to land one of his many tries in the right place and I'd go quietly out.

But he began to doubt his ability to lick me fairly and decided to play dirty. The next time we clinched I felt a terrific blow on my ankle and down I went on my back on the stone floor. The force of the fall knocked the wind out of me, but to make sure, Faestano hurled himself enthusiastically on top of me and completed the job. Just as I was convinced that my time had come another body fell on Faestano, knocking him clear of me. I scrambled up to see Fernando and Faestano rolling over and over on the floor. As Faestano came to the top I got a grip on him and tried to drag him off Fernando. This was a signal for a free-for-all, but the guards who had been interestedly watching now decided it was about time to break it up.

A rap across the posterior with a rifle barrel took all the fight out of me and the same treatment freely administered soon had us all calmed down.

Bill thanked me for coming to his rescue, adding that it was not necessary as he was just going to start in on Faestano when I took the matter out of his hands. Nevertheless he appreciated my effort.

Fernando helped stop my nose which was gushing blood and I tried to thank him for piling it at the critical moment. He was very slight, even more so than I, and he hadn't stood much chance against the infuriated Faestano.

Faestano came up now very sheepishly and apologized like a gentleman. He said that his exuberance had got the better of him and that he was very sorry. We were both fine fellows and any time we wanted to see his tattooing we only had to ask.

Everybody shook everyone else's hand and we all went to bed happy.

Chapter Twenty

WHEN I awoke the next day my face felt as though several people had stepped on it. My nose was swollen and I ached in every joint. I limped out to the taps to dab myself gently with my handkerchief, feeling irritable and angry with everyone.

But there at the washstand was a sight for my sore eyes. Faestano, ahead of me, applying *his* handkerchief to his eye and wincing tragically. As soon as he saw me he smiled, also encouraged by the idea that I too felt my wounds this morning.

He took his hand away from his eye and held it out to me.

"Friends? You are my friend, no?"

The sight of his half-closed, swollen eye colored a subtle shade of deep purple poured new life into

me. I clutched his hand enthusiastically and told him he was indeed my friend.

Thursdays, for some reason no one had ever explained, were usually heavy mail days. The letters came about eleven and Fernando and I got ourselves seats near the door. I don't know if it was this touching faith that did it or not, but we each got a letter.

I took mine off to a dark corner to enjoy selfishly like a dog with a precious bone. She wrote that at last things were beginning to move and kept up this encouraging tone until the end. Then she told me the real news. She had been promised that I would be released by Wednesday or Thursday!

The letter had been posted a week before so that that day was the promised Thursday. Even accounting for Spanish delay, I reckoned to be out by the next day at the latest.

I tore off to tell Bill the good news.

"Well, I am very glad to hear it," he said. "I only hope that there is some truth in it. And if you do get out, well, remember that your troubles are not over. You must tell yourself of poor old Rigby left here to rot and you must do all you can to get me out!"

I promised Bill that I would do all I could for him. I realized that he couldn't be expected to re-

joy much at my leaving, for he had very few friends then.

I went off to find Fernando, for I knew he would be enthusiastic. I blurted out the news to him and he jumped up and grabbed both my hands in his.

"I am so glad, Peter! I am going, too, you know. My letter is from my father saying that my release is arranged for Saturday. I tell you—we will have a magnificent dinner on Saturday night! Your Medora and you and I. Oh, how we will eat!"

He was overflowing with exuberance and I caught the spirit of it. We made elaborate plans of where we would go and what we would eat.

The whole prison seemed to be in the same mood that day. I don't know why, except perhaps because of the unusually heavy mail and the fact that there had been no executions for some time and the trip to the sunshine three days before. Several of the prisoners were playing a game they often played called *Mosca Grande*, or Big Fly. This was a complicated sort of thing that called for three players. One stood between the other two with his hat on and bobbed up and down, at the same time making a buzzing sound like a fly. The other two stood sideways with one hand held up in front of their faces. The object was for the "fly" in the middle to strike suddenly with one of his constantly waving arms and slap one of the others

on the hand shielding the face. Then the one who was slapped attempted to knock the fly's hat off. He had to balance himself on one leg only and to knock the hat off without losing his balance. If he succeeded he became the fly. The fellow in the middle was particularly good. He was very quick and succeeded time and time again in making the other two fall flat in their endeavors to knock his hat off.

A crowd soon collected to see this and loudly cheered the little fellow's efforts. The game soon caught on and we all tried it. I found it was by no means as easy as it looked. After falling flat a few times I secretly decided a little practice was needed.

Just in the middle of all this when half the prison was playing the game and most of them rolling on the floor to the intense amusement of the other half, the two soldiers from the kitchen arrived with four sacks of apples.

What a rush that precipitated! I got up only to be knocked down again by some headlong-rushing apple-lover. At last I managed to get a place in the queue which was growing like one of those patent snakes-in-the-box that you light on Guy Fawkes Day. I hung desperately on to the man in front of me and eventually got to the sack. The man behind me, thinking I was not moving quickly enough, gave me a shove and I went flying

forward. I put out both my hands to save myself and the soldier stuffed an apple in each.

The fruit was the first I had had for nearly a month. I ate the apples, the skins, the stems, and the cores and sucked the pips ecstatically.

The lunch, of beans again, was a bit of an anticlimax. Nevertheless not much of it was wasted. I took my plate up to join the line waiting to get a chance to wash them. The old padre was sitting in his usual place by the door with a full plate of beans and an uneaten apple in front of him.

I suppose he saw me looking hungrily at the apple, for he came over to the line and offered it to me. I thanked him but told him to eat it himself, for it would do him good.

"I am not hungry," he sighed. "I feel that my time is come. They will shoot me soon now."

I laughed and told him they weren't shooting any more, but he shook his head disconsolately. He pushed the apple into my hand and shuffled off.

Later in the afternoon we had news of the latest concession. The commandant sent word down that all the foreign prisoners would be allowed to write one letter home, providing it was written in Spanish.

With Bill's help I constructed a letter to my father in New York telling him of the mess I was in but saying that I hoped to be out any day now.

I promised to cable him as soon as I was free. I also wrote to Medora although this was not strictly allowable as she was in Spain and the letters were intended to go out of the country. But I only said that I was well and happy and that I hoped she was also and that I had no doubt but that I would soon be out. I thought that because of the harmless nature of this letter they would let it go.

The concession of the letter-writing continued the joyful mood and in the evening we instituted a fair. A prisoner known as the Mad Mohammedan started the idea by beginning to play find-the-lady with three decrepit playing cards. He soon collected a crowd and a pocketful of money. Faestano put on an exhibition of his tattooing and two others staged a wrestling match.

It was agreed that everyone had to do something and we all took turns mounting a platform and putting on an act. Most of them delivered witty monologues much too subtle for me to follow, although I laughed heartily at all of them. Several of the prisoners had beautiful voices and I enjoyed listening to the old Spanish songs very much.

I clapped so loudly at one of them that I drew attention to myself. Somebody suggested that I be made to sing for them in English and I was hoisted up on the platform.

My voice has always been the object of rude jokes among my friends and I wondered what

would happen when I shattered their hopes of hearing an English nightingale. However, I thought the easiest way to get out of it was to start singing. I had no doubt but that they would soon stop me.

So I sang them some song that was popular when I left England and they roared applause. Then I sang them everything I knew until I was hoarse. They seemed to like each one more than the last until finally I grew suspicious and refused to sing any more. Everyone gathered around and swore it was the sweetest singing he had heard in a long time. It was my first and last operatic triumph.

I went to bed after this, but the merrymaking continued until late at night. Certainly, I thought to myself, a new spirit had come to Montjuich.

The next day was the Friday that I was certain would see me out of Montjuich. I awakened early and put all my possessions in a neat little pile so as not to waste a minute when the order came.

I had long resolved to be calm and collected about it all as a sort of object lesson to the excitable Spaniards. Bill and I had agreed on our line of action when the fateful time came.

Whichever of us was called would stroll nonchalantly up to the guard and ask him what he wanted.

"Oh, liberty?" he'd say. "Just wait a minute, will you, while I get my things?"

Then he would walk back to the other quietly for the benefit of the awed Spanish.

"Oh, they have given me my liberty, Bill. I'll be toddling along. Don't bother to get up. See you one of these days."

Then a dignified exit with a cheery wave at the rest of the prisoners.

All this was because of the mawkish way the Spaniards carried on whenever one of them got his liberty unexpectedly. The lucky one would scream out the news to everyone, deliriously kiss the guard and anyone else in reach, rush up and down and around for a few minutes yelling his head off. Then all the rest of his friends would join in the mad scramble, and he would be kissed and hugged by all concerned. This disgusted Bill and me, and we agreed when it came to us we'd show these Spaniards how an Englishman behaved under the stress of emotion.

I told Bill that I was pretty sure to be going that day and he again implored me not to forget him. We went and sat by the door so as not to miss any name-calling that went on. We were joined by Fernando.

"Today you get your liberty, eh, Peter? And I tomorrow! Oh, what a meal we will have!"

The old padre was sitting near by and Fernando told him that I was to be released that day. He looked up and smiled fearfully.

"Perhaps they will release me too, eh? Surely they will not shoot an old man of eighty-four?"

We told him that of course they wouldn't shoot him, but he said that he felt that they would and very soon now.

Just then there was an interruption. We heard behind us shouts of laughter and yelling. We turned around to see the Mad Mohammedan walking slowly and solemnly down the middle of the prison with a long coat and a pair of spectacles. From somewhere he had found an umbrella and two of the others held this over him while others fanned him with imaginary palm fronds. Somebody else ran ahead announcing that Haile Selassie was approaching and all the prisoners along the way were making obeisance.

The resemblance was amazing. The Mad Mohammedan was about the same size as the Negus and with his dark skin, his beard and his getup he looked like the Emperor's double.

He was frowning imperially and stopping to give orders about the disposition of various prisoners. One of the prisoners stood behind him with pad and pencil and presumably took down everything he said. Faestano, not to be left out, marched behind, stark naked and carrying a cardboard scimitar. He, it seemed, was the official executioner.

The whole thing was exceedingly well done and appreciated by everyone. All the guards came in

from outside and several from upstairs to watch the show.

The Mad Mohammedan was enjoying himself immensely. He had half the prison executed and to the other half he gave titles and fabulous fortunes.

Fernando was laughing so hard I thought he would make himself ill. Every time the bogus Negus passed sentence, Fernando nudged me and tried to explain why it was so funny. It was the first time I had seen him really laughing and I knew it was doing him good.

In the middle of all this the whistle suddenly blew. The Emperor turned majestically to the door and beckoned the guard, who had called for our attention, to proceed with his announcement. The guard had, he said solemnly, his official permission to speak, providing, of course, that he said nothing rude about Mussolini, the savior of Abyssinia!

This caused more raucous laughter and even the guard who had blown the whistle smiled slightly. This was unusual for it was the guard who called out the names.

He produced a long piece of white paper that everyone recognized and the laughter went out of the room even more suddenly than it had come. The Mad Mohammedan sat down quietly, forgotten in a moment. Faestano edged to the back of the crowd, hoping that if he was not seen they

might forget to read his name. The old padre fumbled nervously with his shoe half on, his eyes fixed on the paper.

The guard read slowly in his dead monotonous voice.

At the forty-sixth meeting of the Military Tribunal on Thursday, December the Eleventh, in Barcelona . . . the Military Tribunal decreed that the following eight prisoners, at present in Montjuich, be shot at seven o'clock on Saturday morning: and the following three prisoners are hereby sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment. . . .

"I wonder if Faestano is condemned," Fernando whispered.

The guard coughed. He had the whole prison in the palm of his hand and he knew it. He spoke loudly and distinctly.

"Pedro Rapallo . . . condemned to death!"

A slight intake of breaths. Pedro was the youngest of the Fascist prisoners, a boy of sixteen.

"Enriquí Ronco . . . condemned to death!"

Another Fascist, the best friend of Pedro; they would be glad to go together.

"Juan Faestano . . ."

He paused unduly long at this one; Bill nudged me energetically as though I didn't know who it was.

". . . sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment," finished the guard.

"*¡Hola!*" yelled Faestano, the tattooed man, gleefully. He was instantly shut up and the guard went on.

"Pedro Rosa . . . condemned to death!"

I didn't know that one.

"Padre Sancho Marino . . . condemned to death!"

The old padre! His intuition had told him rightly; he was to be shot. Eighty-four or sixteen it was all the same.

Fernando turned to me and said it was a damn shame, an old man like that! It wouldn't hurt to let him have his last few hours. What good would it do to shoot him?

This seemed to be the general opinion and there was an angry murmuring, growing louder every minute. The guard went on implacably and what he said next I heard clearly and distinctly above the noise.

"Fernando Pasqual . . ."

Fernando Pasqual! No, not Fernando! He was to be freed tomorrow! Surely some mistake had been made, surely the guard would say he was wrong! Some other Fernando, but not Fernando Pasqual. Perhaps though . . .

"Thirty years it is, lad, don't worry, it is thirty years, nothing else," Bill was whispering in my ear.

Fernando kept his eyes on the guard's face in an agony of apprehension.

The guard lifted up his hand for silence and the angry murmur died away. The guard looked back to the paper.

"Fernando Pasqual . . . condemned to death!"

"No!" I shouted. "It can't be! . . . His father said . . ."

Somebody dragged me down and somebody else put a hand over my mouth. The guard went on to the end of his list and then left us. I was released and saw that Jean the Swiss had been holding me down.

He said he was sorry, he didn't mean to hurt me but I would have gotten myself into trouble if he hadn't done it.

Fernando had disappeared and I ran off to find him.

"What do you say? We'll go tonight, Fernando. Through the hole in the roof. We may get through, and even if we don't it's better than staying here and being shot! Will you do it?"

Fernando looked at me wearily. For hours I had been trying to do something for him. The blow had seemingly knocked him out. He was incapable of action. All he could say was there must be some mistake; all he could do was moan. I had suggested all sorts of fantastic schemes. As much to get him to talk, to plan, as anything. I thought I would go mad if he just sat there muttering to himself.

"Tonight," he answered, "they will take me upstairs to the condemned cell. How can I escape?"

"You can go now!" I urged. "Take your chance in the day. Whatever happens it can't be any worse than this!"

He wouldn't answer me any more. He just sat. I left him alone and went to talk to Bill.

"Is there anything we can do, Bill?"

"No, laddie, of course there is nothing we can do. He will die all right and there is no way we can stop it. If I were you I wouldn't show too much sympathy either; it might not do you any good. . . ."

But I walked away and left him talking to himself. I racked my brains that afternoon trying to think of something I could do. I told the head guard that I had something of importance to tell the commandant. I said that I had discovered particulars of an attempt to escape.

The head guard went off much excited and I felt sure I would see the commandant. I thought of what I would say to him. Presently the guard came back to me.

Yes, the commandant would see me . . . tomorrow afternoon!

I objected, saying that that would be too late but it made no difference.

I went back to Fernando. He was still sitting in the same position, his head in his hands. I tried to

encourage him by saying that his father was sure to turn up with the order for his release just in time as in a book. He didn't seem to hear me.

While I was sitting talking to him about nothing, trying to snap him out of his dejection, Willy the German strolled by.

"Hello, Pedro," he hailed with a stupid grin. "Oh, hello, Fernando. It's very sad about poor Fernando. Do you know what they are going to do to him, Pedro?"

He turned to me brightly. I tried to shut him up but he went right on.

"Tomorrow, they take him outside and . . ."

He drew his finger across his throat suggestively.

I could have killed the idiot for his brutality, but the incident amused Fernando and he laughed. Willy thought he had done something clever and he went through the motion again with great relish.

This made Fernando feel better and he got up and we walked up and down the prison as we had so often done in the past when we used to dream of our business together.

As we walked Fernando tried to make me see that he was no longer worrying. He said that he had to die and the important thing was not how to get out of it, but to die like a man. After all, it was no worse that he should die than any of the

others. He kept saying things like that until he had convinced himself.

He would send for me at two o'clock. I would see it and tell his father that he hadn't been afraid.

"I won't be afraid," he said. "You will see!"

Night came horribly quickly that last day and the time soon came for him to go upstairs. He pushed his way through the crowd to the door. His many friends all shouted their good-bys and he joked with them.

He turned to me at the stairs.

"*Hasta mañana!*" he yelled.

"*Hasta mañana,*" I replied.

Hasta mañana . . . until tomorrow.

The guard came punctually at two with the list of visitors. I had tried to get some sleep, but it had been no use. Although I dreaded going up to see him, it was a relief; it was doing something.

There were only six visitors for the old padre had said that he had no friends and didn't want anybody to see him die.

We went upstairs silently, except for the choked sobbing of one of us. He was the youngest Fascist left and his two best friends had been condemned.

Outside the door I steeled myself for the effort I would have to make. The guard fumbled with the old lock, the door creaked open and we went in; some of the condemned were lying disconso-

lately on the floor, others were sitting against the wall. Fernando alone stood by the window, staring across the square at the pitted wall.

The boy who had been sobbing collapsed in a fit of weeping in his friend's arms. Nobody seemed to think this strange. Not many words were spoken; the prisoners and friends embraced and stayed in each other's arms.

I walked across to Fernando, feeling vaguely uncomfortable. I wondered if he wanted me to act as the others were. I determined that I would.

He half turned from the window as I approached and held out his hand in an "English" gesture. I shook hands gratefully and stood by his side. He pointed to the wall opposite.

"There," he said quietly, "was where One-eye stood when they broke all his bones. I stood here and saw it happen!"

I told him that he mustn't think of things like that and I drew him away from the window. We sat and talked and I was under such strain that I said many foolish things, but he didn't notice.

The time oozed by so slowly that I began to wish they would come for him and get it over. Every time I heard a noise outside I'd say "All right" or "Good-by" and stupid inanities like that. Still they didn't come.

It became gray morning; then lighter as the sun

rose. I noticed the first rays of the early morning sun creep down from the top of the wall dividing it into two parts. The upper half clean and white and the lower half, where they would stand, dirty and black as though ashamed of its job.

Now the guards were really outside and all the condemned got up in readiness. Their friends still clung to them. Fernando started to tell me what to say to his family. I was to tell his father that he hadn't minded dying at all, to say to his mother that he had died instantly and suffered no pain.

Now the guards had opened the door and the condemned were filing out. Fernando turned to go.

"And say to my brother . . . but . . . what? I don't know. . . ."

He went out and turned the corner; I rushed to the window and drew myself hard against the bars.

The square was empty, but even as I looked the condemned walked across in an irregular line. The guards stood them against the walls with their shoulders touching. The firing squad was a dozen, all volunteers.

They had the new automatic rifles and they were laughing and joking among themselves. Three of them were smoking.

An order was given and the rifles came up and pointed straight across the square at the seven.

The sun had risen a little higher now and blazed in their faces.

Fernando was second from the end. He turned slightly and waved to me. At the same moment the new automatic rifles rattled.

I saw one of the bullets hit his hand.

Chapter Twenty-one

I DON'T remember much that happened after that. Somehow I found myself back in the long room. All I could see was that crumpling line. All I could hear was the gunfire and the screams.

Mercifully, I fell almost immediately into a deep sleep. When I awoke it was night again. I opened my eyes and realized where I was. Bill was sitting next to me reading.

"What time is it, Bill?"

"Oh, so you're awake, are you? I thought you'd sleep the clock round. The time? It is eight o'clock on Saturday night!"

Saturday night. Tonight was the night Fernando and I were to have had our magnificent meal with Medora. We had been so sure that we would be out by Saturday night.

Bill had saved me some lunch and while I ate this he tried to tell me the importance of forgetting about Fernando. He said that if I brooded on it in that place, it would be very bad. I saw what he meant and promised to try.

The next day I was up early. It was Sunday and I was afraid that Fernando's parents would come and that I would have to see them.

About half-past ten the guard called out my name and when I went to report he told me that they were waiting upstairs. He said that Fernando had asked that I might see them. He didn't tell me if they knew he was dead or if they expected to see him now.

I went upstairs to the same room that they had been in the week before. The guard opened the door and let me in. I saw instantly that they had been told.

The mother was sitting in a chair holding her youngest son to her and rocking backwards and forwards. The little boy was crying bitterly. The father alone was dry-eyed, his face drawn and hard.

I stumbled through the messages. It was heart-breaking to see them hang on my words. I tried to tell them that he was not afraid, that he suffered no pain.

His father thanked me gravely and walked with me to the door.

He stopped at the door.

"They took these things off his body. I would like you to have his wrist watch as a memento." He pushed Fernando's wrist watch in my hand. I went back to the long room.

In the afternoon I was sitting dejectedly in my corner when Willy the German came running up much excited.

"Pedro, it is liberty for you! I have seen the order. I am sure. The guard asked me if we had a prisoner here by the name of Elstob! He showed me the card and it said on it that the prisoner was to be released!" He blurted all this out in a tumble of words.

I got him to speak coherently after a moment and I questioned him closely to see if he could possibly be mistaken, but he swore that he was not. I began to hope again. Soon I had convinced myself that it must be true.

It had to be true, I told myself. I would go mad if I stayed in that place much longer. I got ready and moved over to the door. I told Bill excitedly and he told everyone else. Everyone came and said good-by.

Every time the guard came in the room my heart leapt and I got ready to go but the afternoon dragged on and still they didn't call my name. It began to get dark.

Then at last the guard came in with a bit of paper and called out my name. I was at his side before he had finished.

"Come along," he said. "You are the prisoner who has something to tell the commandant, aren't you? Well, the commandant will see you now."

My hopes crashed. I asked him if this meant that I was to be freed, but he only laughed.

The commandant saw me in his office.

"Come now, what have you to tell me?"

I was too tired and too disappointed to excuse myself. I told the commandant that my story was just a trick I had used to get to him in order to plead the cause of my friend who was now dead.

He was very kind and told me how sorry he was. He said that he regretted the necessity of executing anybody, but that it was war. He had to do his duty and even if he had wanted to he could not have saved Fernando.

He asked me questions about myself. He said that he knew nothing of the stories of any of the prisoners in his charge. I told him mine and he said he would see if he could help me.

"You don't know who murdered that Jew, do you?" he said carelessly, as I left.

I told him that I thought the Agitator had committed suicide. He thought that was very funny. He slapped me on the back and told me to go back.

Outside his office I ran straight into the English-

speaking Mexican guard I had entrusted with the message to Medora. He looked a bit put out. I hadn't seen him from that day and the other guards had told me that he had been transferred to another prison.

"Did you deliver the message?" I asked him eagerly.

He stammered a few words and then pushed hurriedly past me into a room where I couldn't follow. Of course I knew he hadn't.

Monday morning's mail brought another letter from Medora saying that my release had been postponed until Sunday. I thought this was quite a joke and took the letter to Bill.

He thought it was funny too, but reminded me how much worse it must be for Medora waiting on the outside to be told every day that we would be released and then disappointed every night.

"Well, Bill," I said, "I'm so damned disgusted with this country that I don't care if I never get out!"

No sooner had this illogical conclusion left my mouth than the guard called out my name.

"This is probably it, Bill," I said, not thinking for a minute that it was. "Watch how I take it; first I stroll nonchalantly over like this . . .

"Well," I drawled. "What is it, Guard?"

"Is there another Englishman named Enrique Ricobi here?" the guard asked.

I said that there was and did they want him? They said no, the order was for both of us; I could tell him to come along with me.

"What order?" I gasped.

"Liberty!" said the guard, shortly.

"What! Liberty! . . . LIBERTY!" I shrieked.
"HEY, BILL!"

I tore off to Bill, leaping over reclining prisoners and waving like mad, shouting at the top of my voice. He met me the same way; I grabbed him round the waist and whirled him around shouting "Liberty!" at the top of my voice. We joined hands and rushed up and down the long room like a couple of maniacs.

Everyone else joined in enthusiastically. What is it? asked some prisoners wonderingly. Oh, only the two mad Englishmen. They have just been liberated and this is the way they take it.

When we were too exhausted to continue, we grabbed our often packed things in a disorderly mass and reported to the door. Everyone was shouting good-by at once.

Oskar was sitting up in bed and yelling good luck to us. Manuel was imploring us to mention his case to the British Consul. Kurt was wringing my hand and Yankee was apologizing to Bill who was apologizing back. Faestano was waving a

towel at us and the Mad Mohammedan was dancing up and down in front of us.

We followed the guard up the stairs and turned around to wave a last good-by. Everyone shouted in response. It was a month to the day since I had come into the room.

There was a little delay upstairs before we got back our personal belongings. The commandant wished us good-by and we were escorted to a waiting car. We started down the hill to Barcelona under heavy guard. But Bill and I didn't mind. I was too much taken up with drinking in the sights of the city I had been in for over a month, without ever seeing it in daylight, to worry about the guard. I assumed they were escorting us to the station.

But we were taken to the old prison, the calabozo where I had spent my first frantic week or so.

Bill asked the guard why we were going here and he was told we would have to wait here for an hour or so until arrangements were made about us.

We were taken around to several offices, all of which swore we were not in their department until finally one man said he knew about us. It was all right, he said. Put us downstairs in the dungeons to wait for a train.

With fast-sinking spirits we went to the old

familiar police office and here they again took off my braces and my suspenders and took away my tie and did the whole lot up in a little paper package and filed it away under E.

Then down to the dungeons again. The last door was opened and that awful smell we had thought left behind greeted us.

"Hello," said the guard there. "Back again?"

We wearily agreed that we were.

So they put us in old number three and we sat dejectedly down on the floor.

"Hello," said one of the prisoners, whose shirt was not yet dirty. "You're new ones, are you? Well, don't let it disturb you! And don't think you'll get out quickly, either. Do you know that I have been in this hole for three days?"

Of course we waited patiently all that night and the next morning, but when lunch came and we were still sitting we prepared for another long siege.

There were few of the prisoners left who had been there before. The little dancer still amused the prisoners in the daytime and the guards at night. She still went upstairs periodically and amused the more important men. But eventually she always came back.

There were three or four women prisoners now. One of them was a girl in a Red Cross uniform.

not being badly treated . . . and so on. Just then a guard spotted me talking through the bars and ordered me back to my cage.

I told Bill of this amazing coincidence and asked his advice. He said that if he were I he'd keep his hands off and not say anything to her about Oskar's intentions to defraud her.

I thought I had better find out a little more about her and then decide what was best.

The next day was Wednesday and it still found us sitting in the dungeons. In the middle of the morning the guard called out my name and said that I had a visitor.

I knew that it was Medora of course and I hurried along eager to see her after all this time.

She was waiting in the police room and the first thing that struck me about her was that the weeks of waiting had taken their toll of her also. She was pale and worried. I ran towards her and kissed her.

She said that I looked terribly thin and pale, but I told her that I was all right and eagerly asked her for her news. When was I getting out?

She said she didn't know. She had been to the consulate every day since she saw me last and had persuaded him to come to the Police Court and inquire for me. A dozen times they had promised

to release me the next day and each time something had gone wrong.

She had come back on the Monday that I was first supposed to be freed and the authorities had told her that I had been released and had gone to France. She refused to believe this and said that she was staying right there until she heard from me personally. Then Mack had been released and had gone to the address I gave him and told her about Montjuich. Then the long fight began all over again. The Consul at first refused to believe that I hadn't been released. Finally she had forced them to admit that I was still being held. Now they said that I was to be escorted to the frontier and expelled from the country. This was to be that very day. We were going on the four o'clock train.

I went back to Bill, carrying the flowers Medora had given me. They would, she said, make up for the smell down in the dungeons that Mack had told her about.

The flowers were greeted with hoots of laughter by the rest of the prisoners, but I put them around the cell and they did nullify the odor a bit.

Bill was greatly excited to hear that we were leaving that day on the four o'clock train. To be escorted to the frontier was just what he wanted. I wasn't so pleased to be thus so ignominiously thrust out of the country I had come to fight for, but it was certainly the better of two evils.

I made up my mind to tell the Hungarian girl, Lydia, about Oskar. I thought it was a dirty trick of his to try to cheat her, and I took the first opportunity to get out into the corridor. I told her, simply, the whole thing: how Oskar had talked about her to us. What he had said about her property in Hungary and of his scheme to get it. I told of all the women he wrote to and what he thought of them.

She couldn't help but be convinced when I told her facts and figures. She grew very angry. I sympathized and in order to clinch the case I told her about his wife and two children in the Argentine.

She leaned over and slapped my face as hard as she could.

"You lie! He is not married. He is going to marry me! He is not married. You are a dirty liar!" She started to sob and I made good my escape. I hurried back to my cell with her hot on my heels, heaping abuse on me. The door was locked on me!

I shouted pathetically for the guard to come and let me crawl back into my comfortable cage. All the prisoners thought it was a great joke to see her hammering away at my back. Bill, the dirty traitor, took the opportunity to deliver a speech on the impossibility of understanding women and the advisability of keeping your nose out of their business. I cursed him heartily.

At last the guard came and laughingly let me into the refuge of my cell. It was the only time I was glad to be locked up. They led her back to the women's cell, the door of which was never locked as a sort of Spanish courtesy, and we could hear her weeping for hours.

At three-thirty Bill and I were all ready to go, and we suffered the usual agony of waiting for hours on tenterhooks for our release. At six o'clock we decided that Spanish efficiency had slipped again and we were probably doomed for at least another night.

At seven I got another visit from Medora who said that she had waited patiently at the station from three to six, but no one at all had turned up. She had come back to the police station and of course it was too late for anyone to see her then. Consequently she had not the slightest idea when we would get out, but presumed it would be the next day. There seemed no reason for the delay; it was just the confused state of the internal affairs of the government at that time.

Bill and I had suspected for some time that everything was not as quiet as it seemed in Barcelona. There was violent antipathy among the various branches of the executive. Some officials would countermand orders of others for no apparent reason. This attitude was reflected in the attitude of the guards below. They seemed unnaturally

good to the prisoners, for no other reason apparently than to gain their goodwill. But whenever anyone from upstairs visited us we were all bundled into our cells and allowed only to talk in a whisper and had to ask for permission to go to the lavatory and various other formalities that were nonexistent when no one in high authority was about. This of course was a very bad state of affairs, for it was impossible to run the prisons efficiently with such a division of discipline.

When I got back and told Bill the latest he seemed resigned to staying there forever. The constant waiting and expecting to be released any minute was enough to break anyone's spirit, especially when it was accompanied by a series of disappointments.

About eight o'clock Lydia, the Hungarian Red Cross nurse, came over and stood outside our door. I looked sternly the other way. I had had enough of attempting to help stupid women. However, she demanded to talk to me and finally to preserve the peace I went over and asked her what she wanted.

She apologized for blowing up in the morning and explained it by saying that the shock had been too much for her. I said that it didn't matter at all and we were soon friends again. She told me many interesting things about the prison and prisoners, for like all women she had a remarkable

faculty for finding out everyone else's business before she had been in the place a week.

One woman was there for attempting to stop a guard, or *miliciano*, from walking off with all the plate in her house. He had turned up with a search warrant and had proceeded to help himself to her silver and personal jewelry. When she objected they took her along and locked her up. Another woman in deep mourning, who spent all her time weeping, had been waiting for her husband and son to be released. They had been in prison for two months on what she maintained was a trumped-up charge and had finally been released. Hurrying home to her on that night they had been careless and had taken some back streets that were dark and unprotected. She had found them both the next morning shot dead in the street not a hundred yards from their door. She had come to the police station and had charged the police with murdering her husband and son. She said that even if they hadn't done it personally they had released them after the nine o'clock curfew and notified their enemies of the fact. Of course the police had simply put her in the dungeons until she cooled off.

Lydia told all these stories with great relish. She added that the guards were sympathetic and just waiting for an opportunity to overthrow the ones in authority and release the prisoners, putting the

others in instead. She seemed to believe what she said. At this point I began to get a bit doubtful of her facts. Certainly if she told nothing but the truth about everything, she had had a wonderfully adventurous life. She claimed that she had been in Abyssinia fighting against the Italians and that she had been the personal nurse of the Abyssinian chieftain who went over to the other side. She claimed that when that happened she and two others had stolen horses and food and ridden to join the loyal troops. She also confided that she had been married three times and was looking for a fourth at that time.

"Do you expect to find one in here?" I asked her.

"Well, you never know. We have three Spanish counts and two German barons."

"Oh, you're looking for a title?"

"Oh, no, not if I marry an Englishman. I would marry an Englishman without title or money."

I began to feel that perhaps I had not done Oskar such a dirty trick after all. Then I had a bright idea. I confided to her that Bill was really Lord William with a nice fortune and that he had come to Spain to get away from all his false friends. He was, I said solemnly, looking for a woman to whom position and the world's goods were secondary to her love for him. I waxed quite poetical.

She took it all in avidly and looked at Bill with

a light in her eye that boded no good for him. I thought it a great joke. She told me that she would like to meet him and to bring him over the next morning when the coffee came. I promised.

I told Bill that she had now recovered from Oskar and was feeling better. I said that she really was rather nice and very interesting. Would he like to meet her?

No, he wouldn't, he didn't like the look in her eye. She was a husband-hunter, he'd be damned if she wasn't.

I assured him that she certainly wasn't and went on to enlarge upon her private fortune, her love of ease and luxury, her desire to travel under the guidance of somebody who knew the world, and her patronage of the arts. She was, I swore, very keen on South America (Bill's utopia) and I confided she had taken quite a fancy to Bill. He actually blushed.

The next day at eight o'clock I was called again to the visitors' room. It was Medora again with some breakfast and news. She said she had seen the young man in charge late the night before and he had told her that the reason for the delay was that we didn't have a special passport which was needed. In order for the Consul to provide that he had to have proof of our identity and also it was necessary to have our pictures taken.

At this moment a man passed through the room whom I vaguely recognized. He was the second in command upstairs. I shouted to him and he came over. He said he would see me later and immediately left. I thought of course that this was the usual Spanish promise.

But when I was walking back to the dungeon under guard he caught up with me and asked me what I wanted. I explained about our passport photographs and he said he would take us out right then and get them done. We went downstairs and got Bill and our coats and went out walking in the blessed fresh air.

We walked through the streets of the town and every corner brought more exciting things to our eyes and ears deadened by the weeks of confinement. The people hurrying about and the sight of men drinking in bars, the lights and the noise and the different smells, the food piled high in the restaurant windows, the theaters—all these made us forget that we were prisoners of war, made us forget that we might at any minute be shot in the back by this nice young man, made us forget that there even was a war.

We walked slowly along, with the escort walking behind us, and we stared just as hard as the clean people who stopped to look at the two dirty, bearded, gaunt, ill-looking foreigners. How the girls edged off the pavement to let us pass. How

they looked back giggling. But how we stared at them! They all seemed enchantingly beautiful to us used to seeing nothing but ugly, dirty, fat men.

We came to one of those shops that specializes in cheap pictures, a roll of four for a peseta.

These places were always packed in Spain. The pretty Spanish boys and girls like nothing better than to have their pictures taken. It was full of laughing youths comparing pictures modestly. They all fell back at our entrance. Our escort beckoned us towards one of the machines and everyone got out of our way. The attendant was an effeminate fellow who looked as though he thought we were going to hold him up. He went very pale and backed away. The *miliciano* showed some sort of a badge and explained that he just wanted a few pictures of each of us for the State. The poor little fellow fluttered about the shop like a butterfly and shooed everyone out. He sat us down at his oldest machine and acted as though we were sure to break it. When the pictures were finished he handed them with relief to the guard and refused to take any payment as he escorted us to the door. My last view was of him leaning exhausted against the portal, mopping his feverish brow with a bright yellow silk handkerchief.

But in justification for him it should be said that in the early months of the war there was a lot of murder and sabotage taking place nightly. Many

small shopkeepers lost their stock and all the money in the till, and not a few of them were shot for making too much objection. Street murders became so common, as well as the midnight sacking of private houses, that a nine o'clock curfew was established. Everyone had to be in their houses with the front door locked by nine o'clock.

On the way back to the prison our guard took pity on the hungry glances at the windows of restaurants and he took us in and bought us a feed. We did justice to it.

Upon arriving back at the prison we were sent upstairs to the old familiar office and after a few minutes' delay the original sinister young man came in followed by the British vice-consul (who was a Spaniard) and Medora. The vice-consul was terribly polite to the sinister one, and I wondered to myself what that representative of British justice would think if he knew that the young man made a habit of shooting prisoners personally, without trial.

Bill met Medora for the first time and told her warmly she was a "damn fine woman" and that if I didn't take good care of her he, Bill Rigby, member of five Masonic lodges and twelve years a resident in Spain, would personally shoot me. The vice-consul now called Bill over to do some talking. Bill hitched up his trousers, tightened the patched bit of string he used to hold them up, smoothed

down the four hairs of his head and marched magnificently over to the desk.

The vice-consul asked him a few questions such as why he hadn't left Spain when all English were ordered out, and why he had done so much writing and where he got his money from, and so on. Bill started off by asking the poor fellow in return who his father was and what was his school and had he gone to a university? The irate vice-consul made it clear that he was asking not answering questions, and then Bill tried to borrow a fiver. This didn't work either, so he answered the questions condescendingly, adding a few observations of his own on the inefficiency of the Consular Service, the power of the Masons, the high-handedness of the Spanish Government, and what would happen when a question was asked in the House about it all. The young Spaniard put up with it all very well. Bill retired honorably.

Then I was called over, and the vice-consul told me that arrangements had been made to have me escorted to the frontier by the Spanish Government and kicked across. His main worry seemed to be that I would attempt to return. He tried to impress me with the fact that not only did the Government not trust me and not want me in Spain, but they were definitely at swords' points with the people who had sent me out and if I returned there was nothing he could do about it

and I would certainly be shot. I said that I understood and I apologized for causing him so much trouble. I felt that it was the least I could do to make up for Bill's behavior.

Then it was arranged that Bill and I were to go on the nine o'clock train the next morning and proceed to the frontier under guard. We would meet Medora at the station and she would come with us. Our tickets were bought, our special passports granted and all arrangements made for an escort. At last it seemed we were to be freed. We went back to the dungeons in high spirits.

Lydia was waiting anxiously for me (or probably Bill) and wanted to hear about the latest news, so that she could retail it over the prison. I was so pleased at going out that I didn't mind anyone knowing about it and I told her that we were to be released the next morning in time to catch the nine o'clock train.

She professed doubt and told us not to build our hopes for we were sure to be disappointed. But I was absolutely certain that this time there was to be no mistake. We passed the rest of the day impatiently. At night Lydia came and wrote on the wall opposite the door in large letters, "Never Mind, Just Keep Smiling." We asked her what she meant by that and she said that that was for us to read in the morning when we were not released.

We laughed, secure in the knowledge that this time there could be no delay.

The next day both Bill and I were up at an unearthly hour, for we thought that possibly we would be taken to the train early so as not to miss it. At eight o'clock we had been sitting for over an hour and I began to get worried. At half-past we were both definitely jumpy. It seemed they were cutting things very close.

The next half hour passed excruciatingly slowly. But in the end there was no getting round the fact. We had missed that train. And so the morning crept slowly by and our spirits became lower and lower. Lunch time came but neither of us could eat; we didn't speak but just kept staring at the door waiting for the order to come. The afternoon dragged on and every time the guards came in to call out a name for visitors or anything at all we both jumped.

Six o'clock came and we were still sitting. I was worried sick. I hadn't heard from Medora. What could have happened? I felt all the accumulated strain of the weeks of imprisonment bearing down on me. This last straw was too much. Would we ever get out of that place?

Lydia strolled by and looked in. She called my name and I jumped excitedly. She beckoned toward the wall knowingly.

"I told you so," she said. "Never Mind, Keep Smiling!"

I just stopped Bill in the act of flinging somebody's boot at her head.

"Never Mind, Keep Smiling," I said, brightly. Bill just growled.

Chapter Twenty-two

IN THE evening I had another visit from Medora. She was dead tired for she had been waiting at the station all day long watching all the passengers on all the trains. At last she had come back, afraid that, in some way, she might have missed me.

The young man of all the promises upstairs had explained to her that there was an unavoidable delay. However, it was now certain that we would go on the nine o'clock train the next day, Friday. She said that she wasn't very hopeful, but that she would go to the station and wait again. I told her that I would not get on the train until I had seen her.

Bill was unenthusiastic by now. He said he wouldn't be surprised if we were sent back to

Montjuich. We sat on the floor and determined to wait it out again.

Lydia came around and talked to us. I went to sleep and left her talking to Bill.

Later I awoke as Bill was wedging himself into position on the crowded floor.

"Are you awake, laddie?" he whispered.

I said sleepily that I was, thanks to him.

"You know," he went on dreamily, "that Hungarian, that Lydia she's a damn fine woman!" he sighed heavily. "Would you believe it, she doesn't care for money or position in a man? It's the man himself she wants! Damn fine woman!"

Of course the next morning it was the same old story, but this time we were not so badly disappointed. We both told each other that we wouldn't go, and although each of us thought secretly that we would, when the morning dragged on and we were still waiting we could both say, "I told you so," with many observations on the Spanish in general and the young man upstairs in particular.

Lunch came at two o'clock and we put down our things and went and got our plates. We came back, found a place and started to eat. At that moment the guard called out both of our names.

Bill put his plate carefully down and I spilled mine all over him. We jammed together in the doorway and both stepped back to let the other

through. We both began again at the same moment and again jammed. We got through, tore up the corridor, assured the guards who we were, ran back, picked up our things, yelled good-by to all and sundry and followed the guard upstairs. We were bundled into a taxi and rocketed off to the station.

I kept saying to Bill, "Well, we're off, Bill," and chuckling, and he kept pounding my leg and agreeing. The guard scowled at us both and we beamed at him.

Arriving at the station the guard informed us we had just a minute to catch the train and then proceeded to walk leisurely in the wrong direction. We had to report to the Chief of Police or something. The Chief sent word through to hold up the train and then questioned us and our guard for a few minutes. Finally he stamped our Emergency Passports and we passed through on to the main line platform. We had two soldiers and a plain-clothes thug as a guard, and they were hurrying us to a special closed compartment when I spotted Medora standing wearily at the platform, worriedly scanning all the faces. I shouted, but she didn't hear me. The guards warned me to shut up. I saw that they intended to take me to the train by a back entrance and that I would miss Medora. I did the only thing I could: I ran for it.

I was away and had a few yards' start before the guards could recover from their surprise. Then they were after me. The soldiers yelling—"Stop, spy!" and the escort brandishing a revolver. I was getting nearer to Medora, but they were gaining on me because of my weakness. I kept yelling, but Medora seemed oblivious of all the noise in the back of her and kept her eyes unwaveringly on the main door. I reached her side exhausted and grabbed her hand and began pulling her back to the infuriated soldiers. They soon caught us and surrounded us till the one in command turned up, puffing and blowing. He demanded to know what the hell I was doing and did I want to get shot? I explained the circumstances and asked him if I could possibly leave my fiancée behind? He was mollified at this romantic explanation and said it was all right.

When the guards heard the reason for my sudden dash, they shook me by the hand and patted me on the back. Such is the romantic nature of the Spaniard. I took advantage of the friendliness to ask if Medora could ride in the same carriage with me and received gracious permission.

We got into the special compartment and sank down into the comfortable cushions. They seemed unbelievably soft, so soft that at first we were uncomfortable at the sudden change.

The ticket collector came around and the guard

looked expectantly at us. Neither Bill nor I had any money and Medora made a gesture towards her purse. I stopped her with a look and whispered to her to say that she had no money. She did so unquestioningly and the escort surlily produced our military pass. Had Medora paid he would have produced the pass later and claimed a refund. As it was she traveled on the military pass, the ticket collector being too flustered by the important spies to notice the number of us.

We had a long journey to the French frontier and our escort, after locking the door of the compartment, calmly went to sleep.

Bill told Medora that he was very grateful for what she had done for him and that he would never forget it, that when a question was asked in the House he would see that due credit for the release of the two Englishmen was given where it was due and not to the Consular Service, and that the Masons would make a note of it. Furthermore, when he wrote his book about it he would dedicate it to her as a flower of English womanhood.

Medora, of course, said that really our release would have happened anyway and she didn't do much, but Bill and I had both seen enough to know that without her persistent efforts and continual bothering of the authorities the best we could have hoped for was to end the war in Montjuich and the worst we didn't like to think of.

"What made you decide to come to Spain?" I asked her.

"Well, when I didn't get a letter for a week I knew that you were either wounded or in trouble. At any rate I thought that you probably needed me and so I came to look for you," she explained simply.

"How did you get into Spain when the frontier was closed?"

"Oh, that? That was rather funny! I just got into a train going to Barcelona from France. Then I didn't get out at the French frontier and the train moved across to Spanish soil. A funny little man came in and told me something, but I just smiled and didn't move. He went off and got somebody else who in turn fetched somebody else until there were about five of them, all trying to persuade me that I couldn't go on to Barcelona. I kept saying that I had to go to Barcelona to join my fiancé who was fighting for the Government. They argued and pleaded and ordered me out of the train, but I just said I had to go. So they just gave up and left me. The train went on to Barcelona and so did I."

"But how did you know that I was in Barcelona? I wrote and said I was going to Albacete," I said weakly.

"Well, of course, I didn't know where you were,

but I thought Barcelona was the logical place to start looking for you."

"But tell me one thing, How did you ever discover that I was in prison and which prison?" That had puzzled me for some time, for I knew that there were only two outsiders who had any idea where I was and it was extremely unlikely that she would run across them in a city of a million or so.

But amazingly enough that was just what had happened. The very first morning. She hadn't been in Barcelona for five hours when she met a man in her hotel, the one who had been inquiring for me with Kitty. She mentioned my name and he told her where I was. It was the most amazing of coincidences.

The rest of the story I knew. She told me how she had gone every day to the prison and the Consulate, and how they had at first said that there was no such prisoner being held, and how one day she had trapped them into admitting that I was there and had returned armed with the vice-consul and forced them to let me see her. How she returned the next day to be told I had been released and had gone back to France, and how she had been advised also to go back herself before she got into trouble. But she had stuck. It hadn't occurred to her to do anything else.

The next month had been one long succession of lies and subterfuges, promises and disappointments. She had waited all day at the station many times. A dozen times I was going to be released in a few hours, the next day or in a few days.

Now all that was behind us and we were speeding towards France.

"Well," said Bill heavily, "all I've got to say is that you've certainly got plenty of British pluck!"

"On the contrary," said Medora sharply, a little tired of our bewildered admiration, "I haven't at all. Why, you've no idea how often I was frightened in Barcelona!"

I sprang to her defense.

"Well, of course," I explained. "Who wouldn't have been afraid in a city where there was only a thread of law and order, where murders took place in the streets every night and where war might flare up any minute!"

She turned to me, surprised.

"Oh, no, it wasn't anything like that. I didn't mind that so much. But . . ." Here she shuddered. "But those awful trams! The way they shot along. I felt as if I would be run over every time I crossed the street! Ugh!"

We reached the frontier about dark. We were taken into a room at the station and all the frontier

officials had an opportunity to look at us and at our pictures in case we should try to get back in the country.

When Medora came in I could see they recognized the lady who had sat in the train and refused to listen to reason, for they nudged each other and tipped their hats and bowed low to her. One of them, a good-looking swine, if you like them sleek, was too friendly.

Was she leaving Spain? Oh, that was a shame. Did she find the young man for whom she was looking? She did? And this was him, was it? Well, well.

He looked at me wonderingly and turned to her sympathetically. He was so clean and healthy I yearned to roll him around in the dirt.

When we were ready to go the soldiers escorted Bill and me back to the train, and the Don Juan of the Frontier Guards escorted Medora. I glared and he grinned.

The train pulled slowly into the French side of the town. We got out and joined the line of passengers passing through the authorities there. We were just ordinary people now, no guards watching us and wondering if we were going to give them a chance at a shot, no handcuffs; we were back in a country of law and order. Somebody stamped our queer passports disinterestedly and we

moved on to pass a gendarme standing by. He looked so majestic that I went over and shook his hand.

"*Vive la France!*" I said fervently.

He smiled. "*Oui, Monsieur, mais pourquoi?*"

This was a bit too difficult.

"Never mind, old boy," I said. "Just—*Vive la France!*"

"*Vive la France! Monsieur,*" he agreed solemnly.

We tasted the delight of walking about the streets of the little town unhindered. We breathed fresh air. We looked up at the stars, we flung out our arms, we stood and stared at a tree, and then we went to a restaurant and polished off our long-talked-of, our long-awaited meal.

We could, Bill explained, wax poetical about our freedom just a little better on a full stomach. But I must confess the meal was a disappointment. We found that the restricted diet we had been on had so shrunk our stomachs that we were full to capacity before the main course arrived. We found that fresh bread and butter before and an orange afterwards were the high points of the meal. We would have to learn to eat all over again.

Bill sensibly decided to go back to the hotel early. I wasn't sorry to see him go. It was the first time we had been out of each other's company for a long time.

Medora and I decided to climb the hill that separates Cerbere and Porte-Bou. The night was clear and the wind blew freshly off the sea at the top of the hill. We climbed to the highest point and looked into Spain. It was my twenty-first birthday.

Epilogue

A DAY or two of liberty and the reaction set in. My taut nerves snapped and once again Medora came to the rescue. She brought me back to rationality.

While I was writing this book we drifted along the French and Italian coasts down to Naples and Capri. Eventually we came back to Nice and there at the British Consulate we were married.

After a short honeymoon in Tunis we returned to that lovely part of England where we had first met and there Medora had her baby.

The doctor said, "It's a girl and they are both quite well."